

removed. But it has unfortunately been made painfully evident here that the Soviet Union and some other Warsaw Pact countries are not prepared to honour that right in the foreseeable future, or to discuss in serious or constructive terms the human element of the Final Act. Given that unfortunate reality, it is incumbent on these states which persist in maintaining controls on the exit of citizens from their territories, to demonstrate maximum flexibility and humanitarian concern and to lessen, as much as possible, the terrible burden such constraints can place on the human spirit.

The debate has revealed that lately progress had been made by some States in lessening the frustrations and hardships produced by restrictions on peoples freedom to leave and return to their country. Our discussion pointed up, however, that in a few States there is still a rigid outlook, seemingly arising from excessive fear or sense of insecurity, and a continuing disregard by officials of humanitarian problems. The treatment meted out to some people seeking to leave some countries -- a treatment which is at best unsympathetic, at worst actively hostile -- leaves a highly unattractive image before the world which can have a range of negative consequences. The examples of Soviet Jewry and of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria come immediately to most minds.

Our debate has also revealed, with regard to travel for family contacts and family reunification, that we are dealing not just with the problem of families now long divided by the consequences of World War II, but with the direct results, in more recent years, of the systems of exit controls in certain countries. Proposals of the Canadian Government for this meeting concentrated on solutions to these problems. For example, much of the emigration from these countries has been treated by their Governments as illegal, which has meant, as the result of harsh laws, even more severe restrictions on contacts and reunification by the families of emigrants involved. One proposal sought relief of these penalties on members of families who had committed no offence, but this was firmly rejected as "non-negotiable".

The restrictions on family travel experienced in some countries cause bitterness, but the inability to maintain friendships and professional contacts because of travel restrictions, can also be a cause of deep frustration. We have found in regard to religious contacts that individual believers in some countries may have little or no opportunity to meet co-religionists outside their country. A proposal we co-sponsored on this