

— we have taken a large step toward preventing State action against an individual wishing to exercise his right to leave through the arbitrary imposition of restrictions based on national security grounds. The Vienna Concluding Document also ensures that long-term refuseniks will have the time since they were last involved in national security work retroactively credited against any limit during which any restriction will be applied.

— we have undertaken to respect the privacy and integrity of postal and telephone communications, to allow people to listen to radio from outside the country, and to receive, publish, and disseminate information more freely. Scholars and teachers will be able to have more direct contacts and access to research materials.

— we have taken important new steps to protect the rights and improve the working condition of journalists, and provide for the freer flow of information and greater access to culture.

### **Importance of Conference on the Human Dimension**

Built on this solid achievement in human rights and Basket III, and providing a mechanism for its protection and enforcement, is the Conference on the Human Dimension. We welcome the agreement of all participating States to respond to requests for information and to consult bilaterally on specific cases and situations. We look forward to the meetings in Paris, Copenhagen and Moscow where we can pursue the issues of compliance and of new measures to enhance our achievements, as well as to deal with unresolved cases and situations. This Conference and the ongoing mechanism will keep human rights, human contacts, and related humanitarian issues, central to the CSCE process, ensuring that they become a permanent part of the European political landscape.

A symbolic but important aspect of the Conference on the Human Dimension is that one of its meetings will be held in Moscow. It is a measure of the changes

that have occurred in the Soviet Union during the Vienna meeting that this idea, initially received with skepticism by many participating States, should ultimately have been considered seriously and adopted. It is no secret that the record of compliance of the USSR with its human rights commitments was a subject of scrutiny and criticism by my country and others. It is also no secret that Canada was one of the last to be convinced that such a proposal could be considered. This was not a matter of politics or ideology. It was an issue of principle and practice — one in which Canadians, including the many whose roots lie in Eastern Europe, have a direct and personal interest.

Two things should be clearly understood. First, by accepting the Moscow meeting, Canada has not signified that problems of human rights and human contacts in the Soviet Union no longer exist. On the contrary, much remains to be done. Indeed, the USSR has undertaken to continue its work over the next two years of making Soviet society more open, democratic, and governed by the rule of law. Reforms are to be securely institutionalized. We welcome these promised undertakings, and will look forward to their fulfilment.

The second point I want to emphasize is that, having discussed this matter with the Soviet Union, having examined all the facts and assessed its performance against criteria we know to be important to the Canadian people, we consented to the Moscow meeting not just as a compromise or as a political gesture. Our consent should be seen as an expression of hope, based on recent improvements, and of confidence that the future will bring even more.

We trust that when our delegations, and the hundreds of groups, individuals, and journalists that traditionally assemble for CSCE meetings, gather in Moscow in 1991, they will find an open and tolerant environment for frank exchange.

There are many, many more provisions on human rights and humanitarian cooperation in the Vienna Concluding Document which take account of the differing interests of our peoples. Canada considers all of them important.

Together, they are a great achievement. In most cases they are clear and unequivocal. We recognize that there is still room for improvement, but what is in this Document will, if fully implemented by all participating States, lead to great changes in the lives of millions of people, and will have a real impact on European confidence and security. Let me illustrate by one example from our own experience.

On December 7, many communities in Armenia were struck by a devastating earthquake that killed outright some 25,000 people and injured thousands more. At one time, the Government of the Soviet Union and some other participating countries faced with a similar disaster might have said there was no problem, no help was needed. But this time it did not. From all over the world, offers of help came forward spontaneously, inspired by a natural human feeling of sympathy. The Canadian Government responded to the need for assistance.

But what was most remarkable to me was the response of the Canadian people. Those of Armenian descent rallied in fervent support of their ancestral homeland. Many ordinary Canadians, moved by nothing more than their fellow feeling with those in distress, donated money, clothes and supplies. In Ottawa, during the busy Christmas period, I saw volunteers spending days collecting money. Some of the prejudices of decades fell like autumn leaves. The Red Cross and the Soviet Embassy received funds from thousands of Canadians. Giant Soviet transport planes landed in Montreal to pick up tons of supplies, supplementing deliveries to the Soviet Union by the Canadian Government. In the face of disaster, governments cooperated, and people came together.

Mr. Chairman, I do not think anything could better demonstrate what we have been saying for many years — that the ties between people, that grow naturally from common experience and humanity, are one of the keys to a peaceful world. When people know the truth, when they can have contact with each other, they will reach out across barriers, they will forge links far stronger than govern-