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Canada hosts CSCE conference on human rights

The first meeting of the Conference of Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) held in North America and also the first devoted solely to discussion of human rights, is currently being held in Ottawa. The delegates represent the 35 nations, including Canada, the United States and 33 European nations, that in 1975 signed the Helsinki accords, a framework for solving the political, military, humanitarian and economic issues that divide eastern and western Europe.

The purpose of the conference is to measure how adequately the 35 countries are respecting minorities and promoting human rights. The agenda was set during two weeks of preparatory meetings in Ottawa prior to the opening of the conference on May 7. The conference, which is scheduled to run until June 17, was opened by Secretary of State for External Affairs Joe Clark, who said that human rights are a universal concern. Following are excerpts from his speech:

Canada has placed great importance on the CSCE process since its inception because it offers the possibility of continuing dialogue and progress in areas of interest to our countries, and allows its participants, large and small, to each make our own distinctive contribution on the basis of equality.

...Under this government, Canada remains firmly convinced that a safe, prosper-

ous and humane Europe is a cornerstone of a safe, prosperous and humane Canada. We will therefore both at this meeting, in Stockholm, in Budapest later this year, and in Berne and Vienna in 1986, expand our dialogue and co-operation.

...Issues of central importance such as human rights cannot and must not be avoided just because they are sensitive and can



Secretary of State for External Affairs Joe Clark (centre) with CSCE Executive Secretary Louis Rogers (left) and Harry Jay, head of the Canadian delegation and May 7 chairman, at the opening of the six-week conference on human rights being held in Ottawa.



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