

The Soviets, by not doing anything to stop the dramatic democratic reforms in eastern Europe, had tacitly given their endorsement.

The beginning of that process was the legalization and subsequent shift of political power to Solidarity in Poland. This was the demonstration that the rest of eastern Europeans had been waiting for since the end of the Second World War.

Since then we have watched with interest events in Czechoslovakia, Romania, Hungary, and of course the reunification of Germany.

These changes are fundamental and irreversible. The tide has been irreversibly altered. The genies have been let out of the bottles all over the region.

This conference comes at the perfect time in history for a serious pan-European and trans-Atlantic dialogue. The Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe is a structure in such a way that it will act as a framework for future joint discussion and action.

I wholeheartedly support efforts to create an effective CSCE parliamentary assembly. The CSCE itself encompasses conferences and agreements between 33 European states, plus Canada and the United States.

The Helsinki Final Act, signed in 1975, provides the framework for a fundamental political commitment. The act incorporates three distinct sections or baskets. The first basket is of particular interest to me, as the human rights critic of the Official Opposition. It includes principles designed to guide relations between participating states, as well as security questions including military confidence building. Within this framework, the first basket deals with the whole realm of human rights issues.

It is essential to ensure in the process that is to take place in Paris later this month that respect for fundamental human rights and dignity is at the base of discussions.

• (1330)

More recently, the Vienna Concluding Document took an important step in elaborating extensive normative commitments in all areas covered by the CSCE process, particularly in human rights. It established a four stage mechanism for monitoring and encouraging

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compliance with human rights commitments, and a three part conference on the human dimension within Europe. Furthermore, it called meetings on, among other things, peaceful settlement of disputes and culture.

Canada is an important participant, taking part in all aspects of the process since its inception. We must remain committed to the goals stated: to enhance security and confidence, to break down barriers wherever they exist and to help facilitate the freer flow of information, ideas and people throughout Europe.

This conference is an example of the type of role Canada can play and should continue to play in the international community.

Again, I am most pleased to speak to the subject of this very important conference. I know that all parties on all sides of the House will be endorsing this.

Mr. Jim Karygiannis (Scarborough—Agincourt): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak on this particular item. It is a very important item because when we talk about human rights violations, security and peace in the world, one part of the world seems to be forgotten.

There is this little island in the Mediterranean, the island of Cyprus. For those of my colleagues in the House who do not know exactly where the island of Cyprus is—my colleague says she knows, but for the rest of my colleagues—it is located in the eastern part of the Mediterranean just below Turkey.

For many years that island was invaded time after time. If we go back in history about 2,000 years, the island was first settled by the Greeks. This was followed by wave after wave after wave of people invading the island, settling it and leaving some history behind. The Turks owned the island for parts of the 16th, 17th, 18th centuries and then they sold it to the British.

There was an uprising against the British in 1950s. The people of Cyprus wanted to be free. They gained that independence.

Cyprus is divided between the Greek Cypriots who make up about 80 per cent of the population, and Turkish Cypriots who make up 18 to 20 per cent of the population. They were living together in peace until 1963. In Nicosia, Cyprus, violence broke out with the one side wanting to take over the other side.