

only 8 days in office and we had a good discussion then of international and bilateral issues. We continued that discussion this morning. Nor is he the first Israeli politician to visit Ottawa. In November, I met with Israel's Deputy Prime Minister, Mr. Navon, as did several of my Cabinet colleagues.

These meetings attest to the mutual commitment of political leaders in both countries to develop and strengthen the relationship. This commitment has been particularly emphasized by Prime Minister Mulroney who has reaffirmed and here I quote his words: "our close historic, democratic ties with Israel and our support for the integrity of Israel".

Even as we and our Israeli friends work to develop our relations, I fully realize that there are many issues of concern to you, the members of Canada's Jewish community. We remember this year the 40th anniversary of the defeat of Nazism in Europe. Throughout the world people commemorate thankfully the defeat of Fascism and remember respectfully the millions of Jews who died in the Holocaust. Under the auspices of His Excellency the President of the State of Israel, Cnaim Herzog, a World Assembly is being held in Jerusalem to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the defeat of Nazism. Prime Minister Mulroney has written to the President and to the delegations at that Assembly on behalf of all Canadians and in tribute to the remembrance of the victims of the Holocaust.

While these memories are painful and bitter, we have cause to look with pride on what has been achieved in these past 40 years, in no small measure thanks to the courage and sacrifice of those who stood so heroically against tyranny and oppression.

You will be aware that the Government has recently set up a commission of inquiry on war criminals to be headed by Quebec Superior Court Justice Jules Deschenes. In the meantime, the Minister of Justice, the Honourable John Crosbie, has assured all Canadians that cases presently under investigation will be pursued vigorously.

This, of course, is very much in keeping with Canada's longstanding efforts to protect the civil rights of Canadians and our practice to speak out forcefully on human rights issues internationally. Last Friday I had the opportunity to address some of these issues at the Conference on the Rights of Minorities held in Quebec City. These are concerns all Canadians share but I recognize that clearly there are particular interests of more general concern to Canadians of Jewish faith. We have seen in the past several months, in two Canadian provinces, trials in courts of law which in themselves and in the circumstances surrounding them may have been unsettling to many. Yet the legacy of our traditions includes respect for the law ensuring that it was indeed in a courtroom where individuals sought redress for their grievances against the activities of others.