



Statements and Speeches

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TOWARD THE SECURITY AND WELLBEING OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

A Statement by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Mitchell Sharp, to the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, Helsinki, July 4, 1973.

I should like first to echo the words of gratitude expressed by previous speakers for the meticulous arrangements which have been made for us here by our Finnish hosts. The warm reception we have all received is in the best traditions of Northern hospitality. We are also in debt to Finland for their patient efforts and material support, which were instrumental in helping to organize and carry through the preparatory consultations to a successful conclusion over many months of meetings.

Our ambassadors at those consultations did their job well; their careful labours have produced mandates which carry the consensus of all the participants. Given the kind of goodwill now being expressed, there are reasonable prospects this conference can produce results of enduring value.

Not only have the preparatory consultations produced a useful document, they have also taught us certain lessons about this new form of negotiation by consensus -- lessons that will be of value in the later stages of the conference. The first lesson is that the road to success is to be found through serious and detailed negotiations accompanied by a willingness on all sides to approach difficulties in a spirit of accommodation rather than confrontation.

The second is that there can be no artificial time-limits or other constraints; if representatives of sovereign states seeking greater security and co-operation are forced to rush to their conclusions, the inevitable result will be agreement at the minimum level. With such a result everyone would lose. Our objective should be not quick results but the greatest positive content in the documents that will emerge from this conference.

The third lesson is that negotiations of the kind in which we are engaged cannot be isolated. They form part of a general process of improving relations -- a process which includes other multilateral negotiations and also bilateral contacts. Notable in this respect are the Strategic Arms Limitations Talks and the agreements reached recently by Mr. Nixon and Mr. Brezhnev. We also welcome, in particular, the recent decision to open negotiations in Vienna on
