

I am very happy to be here today as a Canadian, as a former journalist and as one who has come to South Africa to savour first-hand the new winds of freedom and justice that are blowing across this very beloved special country. They carry with them the hopes and dreams of many South Africans, blacks and whites.

Whispering in these winds also are the voices of those who have gone before in this valiant struggle, many of whom, like Steve Biko, died to bring democracy to all South Africans.

It is an exciting time for South Africa, but also one that is fraught with difficulty and danger. Change -- any change -- brings out both the best and the worst in people. Individuals respond to change according to their own visions of where they see themselves in the future.

A nation is the sum total of these individual visions and the corresponding emotions that they generate -- the courage, the honour, the anger, the will (or lack of will) to forgive and the determination to live together in peace.

You have seen that courage here in South Africa -- leaders like Nelson Mandela, and Walter and Albertina Sisulu, and Beyers Naude and President de Klerk. Politicians like Helen Suzman, writers like Alan Paton and Nadine Gordimer, and journalists who would not allow their South Africa to remain silent when fellow human beings were being oppressed and tortured.

You have also seen the anger -- and in many the anger continues.

If South Africa is to make a truly lasting change and assume its rightful place among the nations of the world, the violence must end -- violence from the right and violence from the left, violence by blacks and violence by whites -- all violence -- because violence not only kills those unlucky enough to be in the path of its fury, it also maims those that remain alive. It injures the spirit and it nourishes the anger and the urge for revenge that can contaminate generation after generation.

South Africa's future cannot and will not be built on a river of blood. Those extreme groups who believe that they can subvert the movement toward a basic "culture of democracy" are short-sighted; those leaders who incite their followers to use the force of arms instead of the force of reason, condemn all South Africans to a continuing legacy of death and disorder.

There are fundamental human rights that must be recognized and respected, if peace and order are ever to come to South Africa.