

It is a privilege to be here today, speaking to you, and to do so in the presence of Danylo Shumuk. There were times in the past 12 years, sir, when the obstacles to your freedom seemed insurmountable. All of us were inspired by your own courage and determination. We never doubted that, some day, you would join us on Canadian soil. That we should be together to celebrate Ukrainian Day makes this an especially moving moment.

Even in the midst of these celebrations, however, we remember our neighbours who are fighting to rebuild their lives after the devastation of last week's tornado. No community in Edmonton -- including the Ukrainian community -- was spared the loss of loved ones. Only the genuine outpouring of concern and help from people right across Canada has made the tragedy bearable. Now we are seeing a very Canadian -- and a very Western -- determination to survive and to rebuild.

If there is any single characteristic that marks us as members of Canadian society, it is that we are free. Not everyone is free, as Mr. Shumuk can testify. Some systems of government deny freedom for their own people, and would limit it elsewhere. Europe today is divided between countries where citizens are free, and countries where they are not. That difference is based on a struggle between systems -- and in that struggle over freedom, Canada is not neutral.

We have fought for freedom in Europe in two World Wars. We welcome refugees and immigrants from Europe who come here to be free. We are active and influential members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization - NATO - and we will continue to be because the defence of freedom is not finished.

Our presence, with our Allies, on the front lines in Europe, is a sign to the West, and a sign to the East, that nations who value freedom will not be divided. Those who would pull Canada out of Europe would abandon Canada's duty and offend Canada's history. That is not the policy of this government.

We are interested in the reforms taking place in the Soviet Union under General Secretary Gorbachev. There has been real movement on a range of issues -- family reunification; freedom for Soviet Jewry; a government that is more willing to admit errors and to allow negative information to reach its own citizens on such events as the disaster at Chernobyl. But the facts require us to be cautious as well. We must always keep in mind how far the Soviet Union would have to go to give its peoples the palest imitation of what we already enjoy as free citizens of a free nation.