

The Final Act means that we have taken an important step forward in the process of détente because, for the first time, after long and difficult negotiations, a consensus on a formal document was reached by all countries of Europe (except Albania) as well as Canada and the United States. By putting their signatures to the Final Act, all these countries agreed to every word, phrase and paragraph in the document. And that, you will agree, was a considerable achievement and does give the Final Act a unique status. It also means that we are in a good position to insist that all provisions of the document are implemented by all the participating countries.

The Final Act covers four main areas, which have become known as "Baskets". Basket I deals with security questions, relations between states and confidence-building measures. Basket II is entitled "Co-operation in the Fields of Economics, Science and Technology and the Environment". Basket III is perhaps the most renowned basket of all, and basically is concerned with co-operation in humanitarian fields. The last basket, Basket IV, provides for the holding of a Review Conference in Belgrade in 1977 in order to assess progress in the implementation of all the aspects of the Final Act and to seek new ways of improving relations.

In commenting in somewhat more detail on the results of the Conference, I first wish to deal with a question of great concern to many Canadians - the possibility that by signing the Final Act of the CSCE, Canada is somehow sanctifying the status quo in Europe. This issue should be viewed in light of the aims of the Soviet Union as they have been revealed in the last 30 years and during the course of the CSCE itself. The Soviet Union basically wanted three things from the Conference - a document that bestowed a general blessing on the European status quo, a more or less formal confirmation of its dominant position in Eastern Europe and an acknowledgement of the essential role of the Soviet Union in all matters related to European security.

The means that Soviet leaders saw as most appropriate to the achievement of this aim was agreement at the CSCE to a Declaration of Principles guiding the relations between states. By use of this form of charter, a special variety of international law would have been created featuring separate principles on the inviolability of frontiers and territorial integrity which they intended to interpret as being tantamount to recognition of post-World War II frontiers in Europe. As work progressed at the Conference in other fields, two other desiderata were stressed by the Soviet delegation - principles concerning the sovereign equality of states (involving respect for the internal laws of states) and non-interference in the internal affairs of states.