

Mr. Chairman:

At our last meeting in Paris, November 1990, we remarked at the extraordinary events that had brought Europe through Cold War and confrontation to unity and co-operation. Today's contrast with that political environment could not be more brutal.

As we meet in Helsinki, Canadian soldiers continue to do their job in Europe -- twelve hundred of them, in Bosnia and Croatia. Canada is here in Europe again, as we were in 1914 and 1939, because Canadian security is European security. We take our commitment to European security seriously.

That's why a Canadian Battalion is in Sarajevo, protecting the airport, so that children and old people, women and men -- of all ethnic groups -- can survive in the midst of a tragic, evil and destructive war.

That's why all of us are urging a peaceful solution for the equally afflicted people of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Our Paris meeting was, in many ways, a much easier occasion. Not just because the political circumstances were more pleasant, but because our task was somehow simpler. We came with a unity of purpose to outline a new vision for the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) in a new Europe.

Here we have a different and more difficult task. We have to take the concepts of Paris and turn them into practical steps that will begin to provide real security.

I believe that here in Helsinki we are taking steps that will fundamentally change the CSCE from the one our predecessors launched 16 years ago.

It will require a change in thinking and behaviour by all of us. This does not mean that the commitments we have seriously undertaken over these years are no longer valid. It does not imply a dilution or retreat from the fundamental principles of peace, sovereign equality, security and stability that underpin the CSCE. On the contrary, never have these principles been more important, or relevant, or attainable.

What it does mean, is that we must now adapt our ways to new realities. This is never easy. It involves compromise. It involves trying to reason in the way others reason. It involves political responsibility.

Candidly, we haven't had enough of it in the CSCE.

The 1992 Helsinki document weighs about half a kilo but does not even mention the torment in Bosnia-Herzegovina. During the weeks that our officials negotiated and bickered over the political statement, thousands were killed in Bosnia-Herzegovina.