

subvert the purposes of what has essentially been up to now, and should remain, a technical meeting of experts from all countries, striving to develop international cooperation in a field of vital importance to the rule of law and to public order everywhere. As host country, we felt that Canada had assumed a major responsibility for the success of this Congress; and in such an unfavourable political climate, we did not see how we would possibly carry out our responsibility. I should add that we were also concerned about the coincidence of the Congress with the Seventh Special Session of the General Assembly on Development and International Economic Cooperation, since the contentious atmosphere of one would in all likelihood seep into the other.

However, after an extensive review of the Government's domestic and international obligations, we decided to inform the Secretary-General of the United Nations that we did not want to be relieved of the responsibility for holding this Congress, but rather wished to postpone it. We did not want to withdraw our invitation to the United Nations; and we tried to avoid any steps which might have called into question our long-standing commitment to the principles of the United Nations. I emphasize that Canada's willingness to participate in and contribute to the operations of United Nations agencies remains undiminished.

The respite obtained by postponement must be effectively used by all to bring about sufficient improvement