

I should like to express my appreciation to Maître Emile Colas of the International Law Association and Mr. Richard Hopkinson of the Canadian Institute of International Affairs who have provided me with this opportunity to address the members of these two organizations as well as the members of the Club des Relations internationales of the Université de Montréal. I shall be speaking tonight on a subject which is of considerable importance to Canada, and which, in my view, merits the close attention of all Canadians, and especially of those with a particular interest in international affairs.

On December 2, 1975, I had the pleasure of tabling in the House of Commons a remarkable document. The official title of the document is the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, called from the outset by its initials, CSCE. It has also been referred to at times as the Helsinki Agreement.

The Final Act of the CSCE represents the outcome of a meeting where, for the first time, the Heads of Government of Europe and North America met to establish the basis for future relations between their respective nations and their peoples. Although it is not a treaty, the Final Act carries a great deal of weight because, at the insistence of the Western countries, it created moral and political obligations which must be met by all the parties that signed their names in Helsinki. As such it sets the stage for further progress in East-West relations.

As I said in New York, the concept of détente is alive as far as Canada is concerned. It has been argued that détente has been used as a cover to lull us into a false sense of security. This is a danger to which we must remain alert. Obviously, we cannot afford to let down our guard or let our security depend solely upon the good intentions of others. At a press conference in New York on March 19, I pointed out that we understand the necessity of strength, and we have exhibited our credentials in that respect by reviewing and increasing our commitment to NATO. In my view, maintaining our strength is consistent with the policy of détente, for it was our fundamental strength that formed the basis of our negotiating position and that made it possible for us to extract the maximum benefit out of the CSCE negotiations.