

Statement

95/71

AS DELIVERED

AN ADDRESS BY
THE HONOURABLE ANDRÉ OUELLET,
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
TO THE
BOSNIA PEACE IMPLEMENTATION CONFERENCE

LONDON, England
December 9, 1995



Government
of Canada

Gouvernement
du Canada

Canada

Mr Chairman,

The implementation of the agreement bringing peace to Bosnia and Herzegovina is a challenge to which the international community must rise. This is a priority concern for all those around this table. Many of us have sent men and women into the field as part of the international effort to alleviate the tremendous suffering and devastation that has taken place. It is critical that we now look to the future.

The peace agreement will be signed next week in Paris. But it is essential that we highlight now the fact that the signing of the agreement itself will not suffice to ensure peace. The agreement must be implemented, fully, speedily and with commitment. This is the key. This is not the moment for the international community to end its efforts. The parties to the conflict have requested our help in the implementation of the peace agreement. Canada is ready to respond.

Canada's focus will be on social rehabilitation and the development of democratic and just societies because economic restoration alone will not secure peace. In this regard, Canada fully supports the role set out for the OSCE [Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe] in the peace agreement, especially in the organization of free and fair elections and in the promotion and protection of human rights. We are ready to provide assistance with respect to elections and in the creation of national human rights institutions. In the same vein we will be active in the promotion of a free media in the region and will continue to support the work of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. We are also prepared to provide expertise to the United Nations [UN] in the establishment of the International Police Task Force called for in the Dayton agreement.

Canada's longer-term assistance in the former Yugoslavia will see a concentration of project assistance for community-based initiatives and the rehabilitation of social infrastructure.

Mr. Chairman,

In the area of humanitarian assistance, Canada will contribute to the efforts led by UN agencies, such as UNHCR [United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees] (under the direction of Ms. Ogata) and the World Food Program, by the ICRC [International Committee of the Red Cross], and by Canadian non-government organizations that will be active in social rehabilitation in the region. The work that will be carried out by the UNHCR with respect to the right of refugees and displaced persons to return, freely, to their homes is of vital importance. The full co-operation of the parties to the peace agreement will be required in addressing this issue.

In the area of security, Canada will contribute to the military implementation force, which will assist in the implementation of the military aspects of the peace agreement. As well, we will support the negotiation of confidence-building measures and arms' limits in the former Yugoslavia. We welcome the forthcoming Bonn conference that will focus on these issues. We will also support the setting up of a regional table on Balkans security, possibly within the framework of the European Stability Pact.

We are also ready to contribute to multilateral assistance toward economic reconstruction. In addition, we are prepared to consider the possibility of some debt relief within the Paris Club framework, if the eligibility requirements for such relief are met. It is important that the reconstruction process be effectively co-ordinated. This will require the World Bank to play a central role.

Mr. Chairman,

The peace agreement initialled in Dayton, and to be signed in Paris, marks only the end of the war; it must also mark the beginning of a long process of reconstruction and rehabilitation. It is fundamental to long-term stability that a multilateral reconstruction effort not seek to reward or punish past behaviour but, instead, be available to all those in need.

We congratulate the parties to the peace agreement on their success in ending a conflict that has destroyed so much. We call upon them to work co-operatively in the next critical phase of implementation, in the same spirit of maturity and compromise that allowed for the successful conclusion of the peace negotiations in Dayton.

Thank you.