

Statement

Secretary of
State for
External Affairs



Déclaration

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Affaires
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NOTES FOR A SPEECH BY THE
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS,

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE JOE CLARK,

AT THE

CSCE CONFERENCE ON THE HUMAN DIMENSION

COPENHAGEN, DENMARK

JUNE 6, 1990.

It is a great pleasure to be in Copenhagen for the opening of the second Conference on the Human Dimension of the CSCE. I wish to extend my gratitude to Her Majesty the Queen and the Government of Denmark for their gracious hospitality, and to the Foreign Minister of Denmark, Mr. Uffe Elleman-Jensen, for his kind invitation that brings us all here today. I would also like to pay tribute to Baron Huxthausen, the Executive Secretary of this Conference, for the hard work performed so successfully by him and his staff.

Denmark's great story-teller, Hans Christian Andersen, has touched generations with his parables which teach that, in the end, firm hope and patient virtue will triumph. As we gather at the dawn of a new era for a new Europe, Hans Christian Andersen's message rings truer than ever. Europe's patience and Europe's hopes for a new freedom, a new prosperity and a lasting peace are being rewarded.

In 1975, when the CSCE came to agreement on its first set of principles and undertakings, we were in the midst of an era dominated by tension and permeated by fear. Hopes were fragile for a new age of human rights, democracy, and understanding between the nations of East and West. The CSCE was born out of the desire to move beyond fragility and tension, to agree on common principles and rights, and to begin the process of moving forward towards a new Europe.

There were many skeptics then, skeptics who asserted that the Helsinki undertakings would remain but pieces of paper, far removed from the harsh reality of state behaviour.

In 1990, as we emerge from a year of revolution in Europe - and begin a decade of reconstruction - we see now how important the CSCE was and what it can still become.

The shared principles and undertakings of the Helsinki process were a beacon for the brave, new democrats of Europe and a manifesto for the millions who hungered for a new freedom. And now, as we enter a period of consolidation in Europe, the CSCE can expand on those principles and undertakings, enshrining in consensus what has been achieved and what remains to be accomplished.

For Canada, the CSCE can become the drawing board for the new European architecture. Its comprehensive membership, its broad mandate, and its unusual flexibility provide the prospect for growth into a vibrant institution for political dialogue, practical co-operation and common endeavour.

The CSCE also provides for the essential element of an open Europe. It involves both the Soviet Union and North America. The new Europe must be a large Europe, a hemispheric fabric of common achievement, common principles, and shared engagement. We must not replace two old blocs with one new bloc; the new Europe must be open to the East and to the West. The CSCE can be an instrument of this wider Europe, a Europe whose very breadth will enhance prosperity and strengthen our peace.

Canada's commitment to Europe is both pragmatic and profound. We are tied to Europe in spirit, and in substance. NATO, the CSCE and the European Community form three essential pillars of our vision of the new Europe. Each of these institutions has its mandate, its membership and its purpose. They can be and must be complementary and not competitive. They must work together towards a new common ground of co-operative security, a security based on a web of economic, political and security relationships which are designed to re-assure and to re-inforce.

The CSCE Summit later this year will provide an opportunity to build upon the shared ideals, values, interests and aspirations of the new Europe. Canada will offer its strong support in contributing to the important work to be done by the Preparatory Committee established and agreed to by CSCE Foreign Ministers yesterday.

The flexibility, breadth and balance inherent in the CSCE must be preserved and built upon. The goal must be to institutionalize, regularize and politicize the CSCE process. In so doing we must avoid excessive bureaucracy and redundant organizations. The CSCE must remain lean, responsive to the changing needs of its membership.

Activities in all three baskets of the CSCE should be intensified and the balance between those baskets should be maintained. This requires urgent action and new departures by all CSCE members. To this end, Canada is putting forward the following initiatives:

- annual meetings of CSCE Foreign Ministers and biennial meetings of Heads of Government, leading to a Council for European Co-operation;
- continuation of the conventional force and confidence-building negotiations beyond their current phases, involving all 35 members;
- specific mechanisms and institutions for crisis prevention and conflict resolution;
- a CSCE Verification Agency to co-ordinate and facilitate verification and confidence-building activities;
- ongoing fora for dialogue on economic and environmental matters;
- a CSCE Assembly where parliamentary delegations could meet regularly to discuss issues of common concern; and
- expansion of the principles and undertakings in the human dimension.

This meeting in Copenhagen provides the opportunity to consolidate the triumph of the democratic ideal in Europe, to help render permanent what is now being accomplished. A substantive concluding document should express our common ideals and our common political will to maintain and build upon freedom for all the peoples of Europe.

Democracy is not defined by activities. It is defined by attitudes and by responsibilities. Democracy is not just the right to vote or the right to speak freely and associate with others. Those rights can be present and democracy can be absent. The essence of democracy is the full and free participation of people in their government. It is based on the supremacy of the rule of law. And most fundamentally, it is grounded in the habits and beliefs of citizens - their social consciousness and social conscience, their tolerance of political, ethnic, cultural and religious minorities and their respect for the rights of others.

Democracy cannot be declared or invented overnight. Democracy grows. And to grow, it must be nurtured. Leaders must respect it, citizens must demand it, and everyone must value it. Democracy cannot be imposed by the State from above; it is something which must be lived daily from below. It is the responsibility of every citizen to choose leaders wisely, to exercise rational judgement, to demand accountability and above all to avoid apathy.

During this meeting Canada will sponsor or support a number of proposals essential to a concluding document designed to consolidate democracy.

Central to democracy are free elections, the existence of vibrant and truly independent political parties, an honest and just electoral system, and the right of every citizen to participate freely in the electoral process. Together, we must commit ourselves clearly here in Copenhagen to those fundamental democratic institutions.

It is also important that we enhance co-operation between all our societies to promote the development of democracy. Therefore, the concluding document should call on participating states - as well as institutions, groups and individuals within our societies - to co-operate in building strong and lasting democratic governments.

It is essential to democracy that there be an unequivocal commitment to the rule of law. Democracies must be governed by laws that are universally applicable; and they must also be infused with a universal respect for that law. Central features of such a system of law include an independent and impartial judicial and legal system, the separation of powers among agencies of government, the unfettered right of redress of all citizens against the abuse of authority, an impartial public service where appointment is open and advancement is based on merit, and a respect for the fundamental political and civil rights of all citizens, including the freedom of speech and assembly. It is essential that the concluding document contain a clear reference and strong commitment to the rule of law.

Canada is unique among nations in its multicultural heritage. This has enriched our culture, enhanced our prosperity and defined our democracy.

Europe is moving away from the constant threat of conflict between states. But in this process, old animosities - frozen and unaddressed - are re-emerging. The end of tension between states should not be purchased at the price of tension within states. Democracy and prosperity depend on external peace and internal peace. Protection and respect for the rights of minorities are essential to this peace.

During this Conference, Canada will propose that the concluding document contain the following:

- a firm commitment to the human rights of individuals belonging to minorities;
- commitments to promote tolerance and take firm action to suppress hate propaganda directed against minorities;
- mechanisms to deal with specific minority problems as they arise.

Canada will be making specific proposals in each of these areas. We will propose the addition of an extra step to the human dimension mechanism that would serve to diffuse conflict and promote dialogue by providing for the appointment of rapporteurs to investigate specific situations and report to the governments concerned and to the CSCE.

In proposing these provisions, we recognize that it is not laws or constitutions that will protect minority rights and prevent tension and prejudice. It is the existence of societies infused with tolerance and respect that is the only guarantee. But the CSCE, in promoting democracy, the freer movement of people, information and ideas and in increasing human contacts is playing - and can play - a vital role in the evolution of all our societies.

There are many other elements essential to the development of democracy, and all will find strong Canadian support. They include: freedom of speech and of association; free trade unions, the role of non-governmental organizations in promoting human rights; religious freedoms; and the right to leave and return to one's country without fear for oneself or one's family. Canada believes that a comprehensive statement of the ideals and elements essential to the development of democracy should, at a minimum, include these items.

No one has a blueprint for democracy. Democracies must be home-grown. But we can all learn from each other. As we all evolve and as democracy develops, we will be involved in a dynamic dialogue, sharing advice and experiences. All democracies sometimes fall short of their ideals. But the particular strength of democracies is our openness, our capacity to accept criticism, our willingness to set and meet always higher standards for ourselves - and to be candid to each other.

In our enthusiasm for what has been accomplished, we cannot ignore the existence of ongoing problems: the mistreatment of minorities in some countries; or the continuing existence of refuseniks in the Soviet Union - people who continue, inexplicably, to be denied the right to leave their country. These problems may appear to be less severe than in the past. But they stand out in marked contrast to progress elsewhere and the new standards to which we all aspire.

Mr. Chairman, I must note in this connection the situation in the Baltic States. The CSCE process - indeed the evolution of a new Europe itself - depends on a shared understanding of the rights and obligations of governments. Challenges to that understanding can damage the fabric of co-operation and progress we are now building in Europe. The situation in Lithuania cannot be allowed to damage this fabric. The aspirations of the Baltic peoples and the interests of all members of the CSCE can only be satisfied through negotiation. There is no acceptable alternative to this path.

As we build a brighter European future, a future founded on freedom, a future which promises prosperity, we have an enormous challenge before us. But we have the tools and, more importantly, the will and spirit to accomplish great deeds. We have before us the capacity to make Europe anew, to render universal what has been partial, and to make permanent what we so recently have come to share. In this task, Canada is eager to assume its full responsibilities as a member of the commonwealth of Europe. And we approach this task gladly - with enthusiasm, determination and abiding hope.