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STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

Speech by

The Right Honourable Joe Clark,
Secretary of State for External Affairs,
on Conclusion of the Conference
on Security and Cooperation in Europe
Follow-up Meeting

Canada

Vienna, Austria

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Mr. Chairman:

We are gathered here this week to conclude more than two years of successful negotiations on the whole range of interrelated subjects essential to security and cooperation in Europe.

When this Conference began, I said in my opening statement that our task would not be easy, and it has not been. The problems have at times seemed intractable; the language often bitter; the negotiations tense and at times frustrating. There has been the temptation to gloss over difficult issues, to hide real differences. But only by speaking frankly, by facing our differences directly, could we achieve the real changes our people have a right to expect.

Our world has changed since we began this negotiation, and generally changed for the better. For the first time in history, there is an agreement to abolish a whole class of nuclear weapons. The two superpowers have a better attitude towards one another and towards multilateral institutions like the United Nations. Some regional conflicts have been resolved or are on their way to resolution in the Middle East, in Africa and Asia. Soviet forces are withdrawing from Afghanistan and Mr. Gorbachev has offered unilateral force reductions in Eastern Europe. Our political environment has become more positive, more hopeful.

From the beginning of the Vienna Meeting, Canada raised the fundamental issue of compliance with CSCE commitments. Candidly, but factually and fairly, we called attention to shortcomings, because we were convinced that unless there were better compliance, or a demonstrated willingness to improve it, further promises were unlikely to be meaningful. Far from building a climate of confidence, they would have eroded it.

We firmly believed that this Conference should produce real progress on the whole range of issues covered by the Helsinki Final Act. Canada played an active role in all three Baskets in sponsoring and supporting measures that addressed the most serious issues. We pursued these goals patiently, constructively, and at times stubbornly. We were convinced that we would deserve to be judged harshly by future generations if we failed to make the most of the Vienna Meeting. That was a common purpose of the Canadian government and of the non-governmental organizations, here and at home, with whom we were able to work so constructively.

Incrementally, and by hard bargaining, the Vienna Concluding Document took shape. Subjects whose introduction into a CSCE forum would earlier have been denounced as "confrontational" or "interference in internal affairs" were considered openly and debated freely. We could begin to see that the opportunity open to us was even greater than we had thought, if we had the will and the patience to exploit it to its fullest extent.

Our efforts have now been rewarded with success. The Vienna Concluding Document is a welcome milestone in East/West relations and in the evolution of Europe. It reflects and builds on recent changes. It makes significant strides in all the areas covered by the Helsinki Final Act. Canada is proud to have played a role in formulating some of its key elements.

When the Vienna Meeting opened, we had just succeeded in the Stockholm Conference in establishing a set of confidence- and security-building measures that carried considerable political and military significance. But what we did not know then was how these measures would work in practice. Since 1986, we have seen gratifying progress in adherence to both the letter and the spirit of Stockholm. We now have the confidence to believe that we can further increase transparency and predictability in military affairs. We wholeheartedly support the establishment of negotiations on confidence- and security-building measures to build upon the work of the Stockholm Conference.

We now also have the confidence to embark on ambitious negotiations touching on conventional armed forces themselves. These negotiations will take place within the framework of the CSCE process, but will be autonomous -- a condition we regard as vitally necessary for their efficiency. They will not be easy. Success will depend at all stages on frankness and trust, which in turn depend, in some measure, on developments outside the arms control arena.

We wish these negotiations success. Canada will play its full role. We will be second to none in seeking imaginative solutions to complex problems.

I should not leave this subject without referring briefly to a negotiation which will conclude before the commencement of the new negotiation on conventional arms control. The Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions talks were a pioneering attempt to arrive at conventional arms control measures in a crucial area of Europe. Much of what has been learned from the successes and failures during the many years of these talks will prove useful in the new negotiations.

Other specific elements of this Concluding Document are very important to Canada. We have achieved firm commitments that will improve the conditions under which business people and entrepreneurs can perform their central role in economic cooperation. We have sharpened our commitment to promote contacts between business people and potential buyers and end users, and to publish useful, detailed, and up-to-date economic information and statistics. These measures will expand the economic dimension of our cooperation and growing

interdependence. The Conference on Economic Cooperation, with business people and experts participating, will be an important first step in this process.

We are particularly pleased with the agreement to promote direct contacts between scientists and institutions and to respect the human rights of scientists. In science, as elsewhere, it is free movement and contacts that contribute to the spread of knowledge and understanding.

We are encouraged that the importance of environmental protection has been recognized. In addition to specific commitments on air and water pollution, hazardous wastes, nuclear safety and other measures Canada supports, we welcome the essential message of this Document: the environment of Europe and the world is a common trust, in which people themselves have a critical stake and role. Governments must cooperate in its protection, but it is above all the commitment, dedication and sacrifice of aware and concerned citizens that will ensure ultimate success.

We think the progress on tourism is important. Eliminating minimum exchange requirements makes tourism more attractive, and easing contacts between tourists and the local population (including permitting them to stay in private homes) will offer greater human contact and understanding.

In the section on principles, we have adopted a firm statement on terrorism and have made a breakthrough in acceptance of the principle of third party involvement in the peaceful settlement of disputes.

In the field of human rights and humanitarian cooperation, our achievement at Vienna has been remarkable, especially when one looks back to the days of the Ottawa Meeting of Experts. Some of the accomplishments of special interest to Canada are:

- the commitment to respect the right of all citizens to associate together and participate actively in the promotion and protection of human rights and in monitoring their government's performance. We have undertaken not to discriminate against those who exercise these rights, and to ensure that remedies are available to those who claim that their human rights have been violated. We have recognized the role of non-governmental organizations and individuals in promoting human rights.

- the undertaking to ensure freedom of religion and to allow religious communities to have places of worship, institutional structures and funding, and to participate in public dialogue and to have contacts with believers elsewhere. We have recognized the right of anyone to give and receive religious education in the language of his choice, and to obtain, possess, and use religious publications and materials.
- the commitment to protect the human rights of national minorities, to promote their ethnic, cultural, and linguistic identities and their cultural expression, and to allow contacts with counterparts elsewhere.
- we have committed ourselves to ensuring that no one is subject to arbitrary arrest, detention and exile, to improving the treatment of prisoners, and to protecting individuals from abuses of psychiatric practices.
- we have undertaken to respect the right of people to move within and between countries, including an explicit statement of the right of an individual to leave any country, including one's own, and return to one's own country, subject only to exceptional restrictions.
- we have agreed to a range of measures to remove bureaucratic obstacles to family reunification and travel, to publish laws and allow appeals, to respect the wishes of applicants regarding how long they wish to travel and where they want to go, to remove restrictions on the movement of people, to eliminate the punishment of individuals who wish to travel simply because a relative may have breached exit control regulations, to implement tight, clear-cut time limits for decisions on travel, and to resolve outstanding cases within a very short time after the conclusion of the Vienna Meeting.
- we have acknowledged the qualitative difference between the right to leave and practical commitments regarding entry policy.

- we have taken a large step towards preventing State action against an individual wishing to exercise his right to leave through the arbitrary imposition of restrictions based on national security grounds. The Vienna Concluding Document also ensures that long-term refuseniks will have the time since they were last involved in national security work retroactively credited against any limit during which any restriction will be applied.
- we have undertaken to respect the privacy and integrity of postal and telephone communications, to allow people to listen to radio from outside the country, and to receive, publish, and disseminate information more freely. Scholars and teachers will be able to have more direct contacts and access to research materials.
- we have taken important new steps to protect the rights and improve the working condition of journalists, and provide for the freer flow of information and greater access to culture.

Built on this solid achievement in human rights and Basket III, and providing a mechanism for its protection and enforcement, is the Conference on the Human Dimension. We welcome the agreement of all participating States to respond to requests for information and to consult bilaterally on specific cases and situations. We look forward to the meetings in Paris, Copenhagen and Moscow where we can pursue the issues of compliance and of new measures to enhance our achievements, as well as to deal with unresolved cases and situations. This Conference and the ongoing mechanism will keep human rights, human contacts, and related humanitarian issues, central to the CSCE process, ensuring that they become a permanent part of the European political landscape.

A symbolic but important aspect of the Conference on the Human Dimension is that one of its meetings will be held in Moscow. It is a measure of the changes that have occurred in the Soviet Union during the Vienna meeting that this idea, initially received with skepticism by many participating states, should ultimately have been considered seriously and adopted. It is no secret that the record of compliance of the USSR with its human rights commitments was a subject of scrutiny and criticism by my country and others. It is also no secret that Canada was one of the last to be convinced that such a proposal could be considered. This was not a matter of politics or ideology. It was an issue of principle and practice -- one in which Canadians, including the many whose roots lie in Eastern Europe, have a direct and personal interest.

Two things should be clearly understood. First, by accepting the Moscow meeting, Canada has not signified that problems of human rights and human contacts in the Soviet Union no longer exist. On the contrary, much remains to be done. Indeed, the USSR has undertaken to continue its work over the next two years of making Soviet society more open, democratic, and governed by the rule of law. Reforms are to be securely institutionalised. We welcome these promised undertakings, and will look forward to their fulfillment.

The second point I want to emphasize is that, having discussed this matter with the Soviet Union, having examined all the facts and assessed its performance against criteria we know to be important to the Canadian people, we consented to the Moscow meeting not just as a compromise or as a political gesture. Our consent should be seen as an expression of hope, based on recent improvements, and of confidence that the future will bring even more.

We trust that when our delegations, and the hundreds of groups, individuals, and journalists that traditionally assemble for CSCE meetings, gather in Moscow in 1991, they will find an open and tolerant environment for frank exchange.

There are many, many more provisions on human rights and humanitarian cooperation in the Vienna Concluding Document which take account of the differing interests of our peoples. Canada considers all of them important. Together, they are a great achievement. In most cases they are clear and unequivocal. We recognize that there is still room for improvement, but what is in this Document will, if fully implemented by all participating States, lead to great changes in the lives of millions of people, and will have a real impact on European confidence and security. Let me illustrate by one example from our own experience.

On December 7, many communities in Armenia were struck by a devastating earthquake that killed outright some 25,000 people and injured thousands more. At one time, the Government of the Soviet Union and some other participating countries faced with a similar disaster might have said there was no problem, no help was needed. But this time it did not. From all over the world, offers of help came forward spontaneously, inspired by a natural human feeling of sympathy. The Canadian Government responded to the need for assistance.

But what was most remarkable to me was the response of the Canadian people. Those of Armenian descent rallied in fervent support of their ancestral homeland. Many ordinary Canadians, moved by nothing more than their fellow feeling with those in distress, donated money, clothes and supplies. In Ottawa, during the busy Christmas period, I saw volunteers

spending days collecting money. Some of the prejudices of decades fell like autumn leaves. The Red Cross and the Soviet Embassy received funds from thousands of Canadians. Giant Soviet transport planes landed in Montreal to pick up tons of supplies, supplementing deliveries to the Soviet Union by the Canadian Government. In the face of disaster, governments cooperated, and people came together.

Mr. Chairman, I do not think anything could better demonstrate what we have been saying for many years - that the ties between people, that grow naturally from common experience and humanity, are one of the keys to a peaceful world. When people know the truth, when they can have contact with each other, they will reach out across barriers, they will forge links far stronger than governments can ever build. When people are barred from travelling, from visiting with families, from having ordinary contacts, from worshipping freely, from speaking a language or practising a culture, their frustrations breed fear, resentment and instability. When arbitrarily imposed and artificial barriers are removed and people, ideas, and information can move without restraint, when freedom becomes a reality, then there will be no limit to the possibilities that will open before us.

Some participating States have learned that lesson in the past two years. But we must also remind ourselves where these changes have fallen short of expectations and commitments and of what remains to be done. Candour and openness have done much to achieve the success we now enjoy. This is not the moment to abandon them.

Not all participating States have made the same progress. Even in those participating States where reforms are being implemented, there remain pockets of resistance and all-too-frequent lapses into old ways. In some participating countries, minorities and religious believers continue to be harassed and persecuted, and attempts are made to deny them their rights, indeed their very existence, and to eradicate their cultural and religious identities. The human anguish caused by the forced separation of families due to the harsh restrictions on emigration continues in some countries.

In some countries, individuals are still being punished for exercising their right to know and act upon their rights, for criticizing their governments, and for conducting allegedly subversive activity. Indeed, one participating State has, at the very moment of the adoption of this forward-looking Concluding Document, trampled, in Prague, on both its old and its new commitments by taking violent action against groups engaged in the peaceful exercise of their human rights under the Helsinki Final Act and the Vienna Concluding Document.

Another participating State has, in the face of CSCE tradition and procedures, declared that, notwithstanding its action in giving consensus to the whole Concluding Document, it assumed no commitment to implement those provisions which it considered to be "inadequate". By taking this approach, the government of Romania seems to be attempting to treat the Vienna Concluding Document as a menu from which it would choose those items it would abide by and those it would ignore. This is clearly an untenable interpretation. Our CSCE commitments, arrived at by consensus, are indivisible. My Government, therefore, considers that all participating states must comply with all aspects of this Document, to which we have all given consensus.

The Governments of these participating States must in coming years decide whether they want to move forward in renewal and reform, or cling to policies and methods that are not only distasteful, but now demonstrably outmoded and counterproductive. Canada will continue to encourage change, to criticize shortcomings, to urge the breaking down of barriers. We have no desire to impose our system or beliefs on anyone, but we are convinced that Europe can be a stable and secure place only when all its people can enjoy freedom and personal dignity, and feel safe from the arbitrary exercise against them of the force of the state.

Before closing, I should like to pay special tribute to the Government of Austria for its exemplary hospitality, the standard of openness set at Vienna, and its determination to encourage progress at key moments during the Vienna Meeting. I join as well with my colleagues in expressing our heartfelt thanks for the tireless efforts of the Executive Secretary, Dr. Liedermann, and his efficient and courteous staff. Finally, I wish to acknowledge the crucial role of our colleagues from the Neutral and Non-Aligned participating states, who provided competent and dedicated co-ordinators, and undertook the difficult and delicate task of embodying our deliberations in draft Concluding Documents.

Mr. Chairman, the Vienna Follow-up Meeting has given us a new framework, new mechanisms, and new avenues for the building of security and cooperation in Europe on a broad front. It has launched a balanced, varied and useful program of follow-up activity with innovative meetings such as the London Information Forum and the Kraków Cultural Symposium. It has provided us with more accurate yardsticks by which we can measure compliance with CSCE commitments and encourage further change. The opportunities and challenges are indeed momentous. As an active and dedicated member of the CSCE community, Canada will be there to meet them.