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Re-Building the Human Dimension
in International Relations

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RE-BUILDING THE HUMAN DIMENSION IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

What of the role of people in the great questions of security today?

In this third address in the Soviet Union, I would like to speak of the human dimension in international relations on two distinct levels that are both of major importance to the Canadian Government: firstly, ways in which informal, people-to-people contacts can build a better world; and secondly, how Canada sees the role of the "human dimension" in international affairs through the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) process.

Too often, the conduct of international relations is considered only in terms of relations between heads of state or between officials, conducted through state visits or formal meetings. We rarely talk about the role of people in the conduct of international relations. People, after all, make up the body politic. While a government may articulate the collective expression of the public mood, there can and must be a role for individuals -- the critical human dimension -- on the international scene.

Sometimes we tend not to give enough credence to the view that international relations can be improved, and existing tensions or misconceptions overcome, through unofficial, non-governmental channels. In many ways, person-to-person exchanges, contacts and informal dialogue outside the framework and protocol of rigid bureaucratic or political structures can be rewarding for those involved and can help break down the barriers of mistrust and suspicion that sometimes exist between peoples. The pursuit of a healthy international environment must not only be restricted to the official plane; there are many other ways of building bridges between peoples and cultures in an often troubled, self-centred and self-seeking world.

We must recognize that mankind shares this planet and that it must learn to live together despite the ideological divisions and mistrust that often divide it. This vision of the unity of mankind lay behind the founding of the United Nations in 1945 and the creation of the network of UN agencies that have done so much constructive work in many fields -- international development, health and educational programs, in international trade -- to name but a few, through a co-operative, multilateral approach. Sadly, today these very institutions are under sustained attack from some quarters and sorely need the support of all UN Member States.

The Canadian government, for its part, has reiterated publicly on a number of occasions its ongoing commitment to the United Nations system. We recognize there are problems in it but we are committed to improving it from within. We believe the UN represents an important means to extend economic development, reduce global tensions and improve respect for human rights.

I have in the past referred to the "common ground" approach to international relations. We live in a highly interdependent world where political decisions and economic policies pursued in one country can have a profound impact on citizens living in another country thousands of miles away. While we live in a world made up of many nation states -- with different socio-economic systems, languages and cultures -- we are becoming more and more dependent on each other for the prosperity, indeed the survival, of all.

It is my view that human contacts and dialogue can make an important contribution to the building of a better world. Increasing knowledge and understanding about the rest of the world ought to develop an awareness of other peoples and, hopefully, a sense of shared interests. This process may lead to a greater awareness that we all share the "common ground" on the planet together. It should also help to develop a sense of global consciousness and responsibility so that individuals begin to see themselves as part of the global community rather than simply part of a nation state.

What we really need is for cooperation to replace conflict as the modus operandi of international relations, to improve the common security and economic development of all states. And by security I mean more than freedom from aggression. What we are talking about is security in a larger sense that encompasses economic and social development, the respect for and protection of human rights, the freedom to pursue human contacts without interference, and an end to discrimination and injustice -- as well as the pursuit of legitimate national defence interests and arms control and disarmament measures.

What are the available avenues that lead to re-building the human dimension in international relations? The answer, simply put, is through contacts -- be it through travel, people-to-people, scholarly and scientific exchanges, correspondence, or through the "twinning" concept. In fact, these are just a few suggestions. The list is virtually endless. Between Canada and the Soviet Union, for example, we have established a number of important contacts through our mutual love for the game of hockey. Early in 1987, Canadian and Soviet teams will again come together, at Quebec City, to compete in "Rendez-vous '87", in the continuing "hockey contacts" that are followed closely and enjoyed by both our countries.

In many instances, it is through non-governmental organizations (NGO) that contacts are made. One of the most encouraging developments in Canada, for example, has been the expansion of the NGO network, through which more and more Canadians are becoming involved in and expressing their concerns about the international situation. These organizations are flourishing not only in areas such as disarmament, but also in working for a cleaner environment, and in the fields of human rights, and development. What they do is cut across national boundaries to link up with contacts and like-minded groups in other countries, in order to work together for their common objectives.

I recall that last year, I spoke at a conference in Toronto sponsored by Physicians for Social Responsibility, a group comprised of Canadian physicians concerned about the threat of nuclear war. A number of Soviet citizens participated at this event, following a cross-Canada tour where they met a large number of Canadians to discuss nuclear issues. But the physicians are not alone; lawyers, teachers, students have all developed their own networks of NGO's to raise public awareness and strengthen the dialogue on these issues.

Another important means of communication has been through twinning. In Canada, twinning is a well-established tradition, with over 200 cities and towns in Canada twinned

with sister municipalities in Canada or abroad. Vancouver, our gateway to the Pacific, for example, has been twinned with Odessa in your country since 1944, a link that has facilitated contacts between citizens of the two cities and developed East-West understanding in the process. Winnipeg, our great Prairie City, is twinned with Lvov, Thompson with Aldan, and Kingston is preparing to twin with Yaroslov. The greatest benefit of twinning, in my view, is the building of international cooperation and understanding at the municipal level, and the easing of tensions and mistrust between countries. Whether focusing on cultural exchanges or trade opportunities, twinning becomes a practical learning experience.

As I travel through your country, the question of the "human dimension" in the international situation, particularly as it applies to our bilateral relations and to the overall East-West situation, is especially important. As Mr. Clark said during his visit to the Soviet Union last year:

"My visit to the Soviet Union bears witness to the depth of the Canadian government's certainty that through such contacts our respective interests will be promoted, mutual confidence enhanced, and a contribution made to easing international tensions. It would be naive to deny the depth of the differences between Canada and the Soviet Union, but these differences themselves provide compelling reasons why we should seek to increase our efforts to understand each other."

A few weeks ago, Canada and the Soviet Union signed a two-year programme of scientific, academic and cultural exchanges for the period 1987-88, at the conclusion of the Sixth Canada-USSR Mixed Commission Meetings in Ottawa. The signature of a programme of general exchanges is in keeping with the Government's view that people-to-people exchanges can play an important part in the promotion of international understanding and can help ease East-West tensions.

It is this sort of exchange programme, involving direct people-to-people exchanges, that can help to foster East-West understanding. After all, we must break down the barriers of mistrust and suspicion that too often characterize the East-West relationship, if we are to achieve progress in other areas including our common desire to slow the arms race that diverts so much of our resources and to achieve concrete arms control and disarmament measures. For mutual understanding is, in my view, a prerequisite to disarmament measures.

I was pleased to see, for example, that Soviet scientists took part recently in a technical workshop in Ottawa sponsored by the Canadian Government for seismic data communications experts from 16 countries. They met to discuss the exchange of seismic waveform data as a means to verify an eventual comprehensive test ban treaty. We were also pleased

that the Soviet Union supported the Canadian-initiated resolution at the United Nations on the role of Verification in the arms control and disarmament process. These contacts illustrate the value of cooperation in the arms control and disarmament field.

But our desire to cooperate, not conflict, cannot close our eyes to circumstances or conditions which are the antithesis of justice or an impediment to security. These conditions must be recognized and dealt with in order that true and lasting security is achieved. This holistic approach to the question of security which, as I said earlier, encompasses questions of socio-economic development, human rights, national defence interests and the pursuit of viable arms control and disarmament measures, is also reflected, in the European context, in Canada's participation in the CSCE process.

The Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), signed in Helsinki in August 1, 1975, addressed a range of issues reflecting the political, military, economic and humanitarian concerns of the participating states. The "human dimension" comprises Principle VII on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, one or two other principles, and the third Basket which has as its principal themes human contacts, including family reunification and visits, the freer flow of information, and cultural and educational co-operation and exchanges.

In a wider sense, the concept of the "human dimension" in international affairs runs throughout the Final Act. It establishes that people, as well as governments, have a vital role to play in creating international stability and confidence, and that the freer flow of people, ideas, and information is an indispensable element in all facets of European security and cooperation. I regret to have to say to you here that what we have seen since Helsinki is a disappointing record of implementation of these commitments under the Final Act by some countries.

As Mr. Clark pointed out in his address to the opening plenary of the Vienna Follow-Up Meeting of the CSCE last month, confidence-building between East and West is at the core of the CSCE process and Canada is wholly committed to this process. However, he said, and I quote:

"In order to achieve progress, however, we will have to come to grips with a significant problem affecting confidence. Simply put, that problem is that confidence requires compliance. Some countries represented here today have failed signally to implement many of the commitments they undertook at Helsinki and Madrid, and indeed in some cases there has been backsliding since 1975. An important opportunity has thus been lost to strengthen security and cooperation in Europe. Even worse, by failing to implement commitments they made at the highest political level, these countries have contributed not to the building, but to the erosion, of confidence in the CSCE

process and, to a great extent, to an erosion of our confidence in their willingness to honour commitments in other areas."

Canada wants to see "positive signs" from participating countries who have failed to live up to principles of the Helsinki Act that they will undertake real steps to honour their commitments under the CSCE process. For many Canadians, continued confidence in this process will be primarily measured by the degree to which the contradiction between the actions of these countries, and their professed desire for détente, can be reconciled.

The Final Act, in our view, is indivisible. Confidence depends on making progress in all its component parts. The Act essentially enshrines three sets of relationships that are essential to enhancing security; government to government; government to people; and people to people. The signatories to the Final Act have committed themselves to fostering forward progress in each, without which true security is not possible.

It is this quest for true human security that now dominates the international agenda. The old animosities must give way to a new process of reconciliation. The growing number of cultural, religious, athletic, scientific, agricultural and business exchanges between peoples of many nations should increase

our understanding and respect for one another as human beings. The widening of this process of re-humanization in the nuclear era must gradually lead to political recognition of the common ground we all must protect.