



Statements and Speeches

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CONFERENCE ON SECURITY AND CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE AT A DECISIVE STAGE

A Statement by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Allan J. MacEachen, at the Banff '74 International Conference on Slavic Studies, September 6, 1974.

It is a pleasure to have the opportunity to address this distinguished academic gathering so soon after taking up my new functions as Secretary of State for External Affairs. In fact, this is my first public speech in that capacity, and I think it is a particularly appropriate occasion, because your concerns and mine are to a significant degree both related and complementary. Related, because it is clear to any student of international affairs that the activities and aspirations of the 370 million people who live in the U.S.S.R. and Eastern Europe are bound to be of crucial importance to the wider questions of world peace and stability that must be of concern to all governments. Complementary, because, while you are for the most part engaged in the academic and private sectors and I in the public sector, we are both contributing in our different ways to the broader contacts and deeper mutual understanding that are essential ingredients of better East-West relations.

Canada has long been in the forefront of Western countries that have sought improvement of those relations through the process we call *détente* -- the reduction of tensions and the promotion of co-operation on the basis of mutual confidence and reciprocal benefit. We have long realized that a balanced military stand-off would not be a sufficient basis for lasting security. We, therefore, together with our allies in NATO, began to look for security through better relations between governments. It is significant, I think, that a particularly Canadian approach to alliance -- one which Mr. Pearson had for many years advocated -- was vindicated by this process. For NATO, in the course of the Sixties, began to evolve into what he had wanted for so long -- a truly consultative organization where the great issues of peace could be discussed and the way prepared for a relaxation of tension in that most tense of continents, Europe. This approach did not, of course, mean the abandonment of the physical means of security for the sake of a still hypothetical *détente*. One cannot hope -- or even wish -- to turn policy over as though it were a pancake. But change is in the nature of things -- the world will

not stand still, given man's thirst for learning and his talent for technology. If we in the West have learned anything in these recent eventful years, it is that change is bad only if it occurs through violent convulsions and that the essential thing is to see that it is accomplished in a peaceful, progressive, orderly, step-by-step way.

At about the same time, the leadership in Eastern Europe, presented with the same facts, appeared to be coming to some of the same conclusions. There thus began the slow, sometimes awkward, crab-like approach towards a new relationship, which is commonly called "*détente*" in the West and "peaceful coexistence" in Communist terminology. There are still many in East and West who look back at the relative stability of the last quarter-century, and conclude that two armed and guarded camps are the most essential element of safety. But I believe that realistic people looking ahead into the last quarter of this century know that some modification in this approach will be necessary.

What sort of modification? That is the big question-mark that hangs over the *détente* process at this important stage of East-West relations. From the point of view of Canadians (and not only Canadians, I believe), it will not be good enough if the answer is the mere replacement of opposing armed camps of steel with closed camps of the mind. While there may be a stability of sorts through mutual deterrence, there can be little prospect of peaceful change and development in a mutually-antagonistic political and intellectual life. Some call for peaceful coexistence of systems and governments -- and that is certainly part of what we are all looking for. But coexistence without an element of change -- without the ability to adjust to our rapidly-developing world and its new challenges -- will bring a rigidity and even a brittleness that cannot help but endanger both sides. As my predecessor said in his address at Helsinki:

"There must be a broader and more dynamic concept of coexistence of people as well as states, of ideas and way of life as well as of regimes and systems. How, otherwise, can they enrich one another and promote the ideals of mankind? Otherwise we shall have only uneasy existence in which real *détente* -- lasting and rewarding for all -- will be impossible."

This, then, is the outlook with which we have approached the negotiating process that has now reached a decisive stage at the

Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe taking place in Geneva. What our representatives there are trying to do is to negotiate a realistic, workable compromise between the two approaches to relations between governments and between people -- to find common elements and to leave open as many possibilities as can be for future improvements in these relations.

This is not to say that peaceful relations between states, so insistently advocated by the Eastern European countries, are not important. They are indeed, and, if declarations of principle will help to ensure political stability in the international sphere, we shall gladly continue to co-operate in their enunciation -- particularly since they will convince many of the safety of planning on the basis of a generally peaceful and settled political environment. But the decalogue of Helsinki must not be engraved on tablets of stone at Geneva. The element of dynamism, the possibility of progressive change, must be implicit even in inter-state relations. Perhaps for this reason more than any other, we have insisted that the CSCE is not a peace conference -- a new Versailles that would harden inequities and prolong the bitterness that come from the division and alienation of peoples.

When Canada spoke of dynamic coexistence at Helsinki, we had in mind something far broader -- something that would influence significantly the shape of developments in Europe and North America over the coming years. At the same time let me make it as clear as I can -- this process of confidence-building and adaptation is not intended as a threat to anyone. Our wish is to exchange distrust and hostility for tolerance and confidence, not simply to create an arena for the elimination of one system by another. The CSCE, and whatever follows, must have a more positive objective -- the mutual acceptance and accommodation of systems -- or it will be a failure.

For Canadians and others who live in "open societies", the role and influence of people, of individuals, are an integral part of the dynamism of international relations. Foreign policy, to be relevant and meaningful, must enjoy public understanding and support. For us, therefore, it is important to consider relations between people as well as relations between states or political systems. If we are to improve relations between East and West, and this is the fundamental purpose of the CSCE, then it is essential to ensure that there are improvements in those areas that affect the peoples of our countries directly. The exchange of views, ideas and experiences to which your conference is devoted is, of course, a part of this essential process in East-West

relations. In CSCE terminology, you are engaged in the improvement of human contacts, of information and of access to culture -- the essence of the so-called "Basket Three".

Progress in Basket Three is not something that can be achieved by the stroke of a pen at a single spectacular meeting of high state dignitaries, or by putting basic issues off indefinitely into the future. It can be accomplished only by small steps -- by the progressive reduction of the barriers to the movement of people, ideas and culture. At Geneva we must start not by abandoning the discussion of key problems (as some have suggested) but by opening doors and indicating the directions in which we should go after we pass through them. The general principles of freer movement of persons, ideas, culture and trade, which were accepted at Helsinki, should now be firmly established, and some means chosen -- the more obviously needed ones -- to begin the process of practical implementation. The Canadian delegation at Geneva, in company with our friends, has emphasized some aspects of human contacts that will have the most obvious effect -- both psychologically and in a humanitarian sense. The first steps in human contacts can be accomplished by removing the irritants of divided families, spouses and engaged couples, and by improving and increasing the possibility of visits by individuals and groups between East and West.

Greater access to the publications of both Eastern and Western Europe, coupled with a freer access to each other's culture, are also obvious first steps in creating the basis for the degree of confidence that must permeate all levels of relations if we are to achieve stability in the future. Confidence and stability must indeed be the watchwords in an increasingly interdependent world.

One of the major problems that we have encountered at the CSCE is the insistence of certain participants on the sanctity of "laws, customs and regulations". This is another way of saying that national laws and systems should prevail whenever they come into conflict with international laws and obligations. I suggest there is another, more enlightened, approach. Each state has, of course, the sovereign right to decide what it will accept by way of international obligations, but once it has done so I believe it is under a moral compunction to see that these obligations are fulfilled. This is surely the only realistic basis for international co-operation. In other words, if a national law or practice conflicts with an undertaking given at the CSCE, there will have to be an understanding among participants that something

will be done about it. Just as with a trade agreement, if tariff or tax laws do not permit the fulfilment of an undertaking, they are changed; this is an accepted international practice.

Thus, when one asks why CSCE is taking so long, why there are so many difficulties, why participants are so meticulous, so "bureaucratic", this is the main reason. The kinds of understanding we need for *détente* were perhaps not fully perceived by some at the outset, when many thought we were beginning an elaborate public-relations exercise with little content. *Détente* will not be achieved so easily. The CSCE, if it is to succeed, has much more fundamental objectives. For each country, there are a few issues that, in its view, should be addressed in the form of principles or of practical provisions if *détente* is to be a reality. I have mentioned some of our own ideas. None of this will make for an easy passage, or a facile move to the third and final stage, or to some kind of follow-up procedures. We warned our friends a year ago that we foresaw a long conference; I can tell them again now that, for the same reasons, a long, hard pull still lies ahead if we are to achieve balanced and substantial results of practical and lasting value.

As far as Canada is concerned, we are prepared to be as patient, as constructive and as flexible as necessary to achieve such results. But they must be balanced as well as substantial, and that will require a further effort by all the participants. If in the end it has to be admitted that the results achieved are not both balanced and substantial, then so be it. Better to be realistic enough to acknowledge the facts than to indulge in pretence or wishful thinking. On the whole, however, and in spite of the painful slowness of the negotiations, I find more ground for optimism than for pessimism. There is reason to think that attitudes are slowly changing -- not, as some think, because some participants are willing to hold out longer than others but because all involved may be coming to realize what will be possible at this time and what doors must be opened for future progress.

Thus we approach the reopening of the Geneva meetings next week with modest confidence and measured hope. We know that time and patience are needed, as one would expect in complex negotiations such as these, and that the decisions called for from governments are difficult ones. But, as long as governments are prepared to face up to decisions like these -- the decisions involved in more co-operative relations between states and more open relations between people --, they are less likely to be considering the expansion of military potential. Conversely, if the participating

governments find it impossible to take such decisions at this time, let no one underestimate the significance not only for the CSCE but also for relations between states with different political and economic systems. For my part, I think there is a considerable desire not only to come to a positive conclusion at the CSCE but to go on to ensure that what is accomplished on paper there will be put into practice. If that all-important step can be taken, there will be real reason for confidence in the development of East-West relations in the years to come.

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