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CONFERENCE ON EUROPEAN SECURITY AND CO-OPERATION:

CANADIAN EXPECTATIONS

A Statement by the Canadian Ambassador to Finland, Mr. E.A. Coté, at the Multilateral Talks Preparatory to the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, Helsinki, December 1, 1972.

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With regard to the forthcoming conference,... these talks have already provided us with the opportunity of hearing some highly valid points of view. We shall give careful attention to other opinions expressed by our colleagues during the talks.

It is not by accident... that Canada is involved when the countries of Europe gather to seek solutions to problems that are often the lingering result of two world wars. Canada was very much involved in these two tragic conflicts; thousands of Canadians who died in Europe bear silent witness to this fact. Our traditions and cultures are for the most part European in origin. We have economic and historical ties with many different parts of Europe. There is scarcely a country represented here that is not the homeland of some Canadian citizen.

The ties between Europe and Canada are not only of historic interest, however; they are very vital, contemporary links, which will doubtless be developed still further in the future. Canada looks to Europe in economic and trade matters, for scientific and technical exchanges, and also in the exciting field of culture. Moreover, Canadian and European prosperity are of mutual advantage to us.

From the geographic point of view, communications are constantly reducing the distance between Canada and Europe -- either across the Atlantic, or over the Arctic Ocean. Canada's security will be increased as European security increases.

In view of the interests, ties and realities that bind us to Europe, we plan to co-operate to the fullest extent possible in the current talks.

Canadian authorities feel that the conference we are seeking to organize should not be considered as an isolated event. It is rather an integral part of a series of negotiations and actions to be taken in an effort to reinforce security and co-operation in Europe so as to lessen and, where possible, remove the tensions in that continent. Some of my colleagues have already mentioned a few of the steps already taken in this direction. The effect of these steps will be considerable, and will reach people in countries far from Europe.

Other measures come to mind... that would promote better conditions for the people, reduction of tensions between countries and an increasing respect for the freedom and integrity of individuals and nations.

Canada has long supported the proposal that talks be held to prepare the ground for a Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe. Such a conference, if carefully prepared and held after sufficient common ground has been found to offer reasonable prospects for its success, could be a useful part of the general process of negotiations which is under way in Europe.

Some have been sceptical about the use of the conference method to approach the many problems that cry for action on the European scene. We have not been of that number. We hope that this grouping of politically-mature states can work together in a spirit of common sense and accommodation to find ways of gradually reducing the barriers of antagonism and distrust which still persist.

At the same time, our expectations should be realistic. At first the conference method may achieve relatively few successes, but they will have enhanced importance because of the prestige of their origin. On the other hand, none of us would be content with a conference that had only superficial results. A conference that did no more than agree on high-sounding but empty forms of words would create a dangerous illusion of progress. This is why the Canadian Government is of the view that the conference should make concrete and real contributions to security and co-operation; it should deal with and resolve the underlying causes of division and tension in Europe; it should try to agree on specific steps -- however modest they may be in the first instance -- to improve the situation. In the best of circumstances, this will not be easy to accomplish. We should bear in mind that ministers at a conference will probably have only a few days to plan their work, debate the issues in depth, and agree on the follow-up work they think necessary. They are bound to be under intense time pressures. For all these reasons, the conference must be carefully prepared if it is to realize the hopes placed in it. This fact gives our own preparatory talks a special importance. We favour a step-by-step approach to our tasks here. A logical sequence of subjects should be followed, to permit concentration on a single area at a time and thus to build confidence for solving the next problem.

I would suggest: first, we should thoroughly explore our respective approaches to the proposed agenda items and arrive at a clear and agreed formulation of the agenda so as to ensure that a conference will have a reasonable chance of success.

Second, we should provide an adequate organizational and procedural structure for the conference.

Finally, having done these things, we can readily set a date and place for the conference.

The first of these tasks will be the most difficult and most important. It will also be the most time-consuming, but we believe that none of us should force the pace in tackling it. Each item to be inscribed in the conference agenda should be carefully examined. The words used in the agenda and to elaborate on the items can determine the direction of the conference and either help or hinder the achievement of consensus.

It has been suggested that ministers at the conference, after their own debate of the issues, should assign tasks to various commissions of officials, each of which would consider a number of propositions. We agree with this suggestion and think we should try in our consultations here to provide mandates that would, in effect, be an elaboration of the agenda items, setting out in a general, and, if possible, non-controversial, way the various points the proposed commissions would consider at the conference. These points would then be debated, amended, accepted or rejected in the commissions or by the conference itself. In drawing up these mandates, it will become evident whether or not sufficient areas of common ground can be found to ensure success.

I might mention very briefly here the Canadian approach to some of the possible agenda items.

In the field of security, one area will be that of a declaration of guiding principles governing relations between states. We agree on the importance of this item, and we think there should be an exchange of views in Helsinki on the elements which might go into such a declaration. Great care will have to be exercised in its formulation. For example, while the principle that frontiers should not be changed by force is one that should gain universal acceptance, we should avoid phrases that give the impression that the conference is taking on the responsibility of a peace conference by establishing permanent frontiers in Europe or recognizing them in international law.

In our view, the conference should also seek to reach agreement on certain military aspects of security, including, perhaps, advance notification of military movements and observations of manoeuvres as steps that would help to build confidence between countries and help to enhance stability.

In the Canadian view, co-operation should be as important a part of the conference as security. In this field, the conference might, for one thing, contribute to and complement efforts already under way under United Nations auspices to preserve and improve the environment. The conference might also suggest means to increase and extend the benefits that accrue to all peoples through advances in science and technology. In the field of trade and

payments, would it be too much to hope that the way might be paved towards a lowering of some of the barriers that have caused exchanges in some parts of Europe to lag behind the general growth in international trade? We should also hope that whatever new forms of economic co-operation were developed among countries at the conference would be outward-looking in their orientation and of a kind that would also benefit the developing states. In this context, we believe that the principles to be applied should include those underlying the GATT, Bretton Woods and related agreements, namely non-discrimination, uniform standards, common regulations, stability of markets and modification by consultations.

It is particularly important, in our view, that the agenda and commission mandates should facilitate agreement on practical and acceptable measures to reduce progressively the barriers to the movement of people, ideas and information. In this area, we realize the approach must be gradual, but we hope that progress will prove possible. One aspect of special interest to Canadians would be measures to remove obstacles to the movement of members of families who might wish to join or visit their relatives in other countries.

The documents we prepare for the conference should also point the way to the further development of cultural relations, on the basis of a broad definition of culture and a search for more imaginative approaches in the field of cultural exchanges.

Progress towards a conference will in itself be progress towards an increased sense of security in Europe. A conference that produces substantial advances towards *détente* will complement discussions on force reductions in Europe, which are scheduled to begin at the end of January 1973. The negotiations in both areas may be protracted, for they will both be dealing with complex and sensitive subjects. The importance of the issues involved imposes a heavy responsibility on us to conduct these various talks, and those at the conference itself, in a spirit of mutual understanding and in pursuit of the principle of mutual advantage.

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