

security. Finally, even if Canadian action proves ineffective, it allows Canadians at least to keep their self-respect, reassured and united by a sense they they have tried to do the right thing.

Others argue, just as vigorously, for strategies of “constructive engagement;” they say Canadians can best affect the nature of other societies, and the conduct of other governments, by building relationships in those countries, and encouraging their economic and political development. They say that personal relationships are especially important in Asian societies, where ties of kinship, friendship, business and official connection are often preconditions of influence. Moreover, the argument runs, the very structures and habits necessary for active trade and investment—the rule of law, transparent and reliable regulation, relatively free markets, education and much else—tend sooner or later to engender conditions favoring respect for human rights. Finally, it is often said that economic growth from trade and investment leads to an expanding middle class with the political and economic heft to assert individual rights and freedoms. (South Korea and Taiwan being the currently preferred examples.)

What is the best policy approach? Is the single-minded determination to speak and act against foreign human-rights abuses just so much sanctimony? Is “constructive engagement” nothing more than profitable self-justification? Or rather, can these two seemingly opposed positions be accommodated in an effective foreign policy that Canadians could support? To explore the potential for useful compromise, consider two other issues:

Issue One: The rights that Canadians generally value most (the ones listed in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, for instance) might not include all the rights