

The events of the past two years in the former Soviet Union and in Central and Eastern Europe have confirmed that enormous political, military and economic strength will inevitably be challenged, if basic freedoms are denied to the general population.

It is in this context that Canada is internationally strengthening its advocacy for the development of democratic principles and institutions, the establishment of fair and effective governing and judicial systems, and the broad acceptance and implementation of human rights, as the foundation for establishing peace and stability in individual countries and in the world community. This is a position that I will reinforce strongly next week before the United Nations General Assembly.

At its very essence, we will continue to promote the basic human rights of the individual that are central to our own Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

We also continue to seek international commitment to the recognition of women's rights as human rights. In many countries, women are still bought, sold, beaten, mutilated and degraded. This violence, based solely on gender, must be ended permanently and without exception.

At the next level, we promote responsible and responsive democratic institutions: parliaments, courts and systems for law enforcement.

We also promote the concept of "good governance." Good governance refers to how a country operates and how a government makes choices, such as the adequacy of spending on social protection and education, or the appropriateness of allocations for defence. A free market system is essential, as is transparency in decision making and respect for the rule of law.

As the Secretary-General of the United Nations said: "There is an obvious connection between democratic practices ... and the achievement of true peace and security in any new and stable political order."

The goal of "peace and security" has remained an elusive one, and much of the discussion at the United Nations will centre on the Secretary-General's proposal called "Agenda for Peace." It is a far-ranging document, covering the full spectrum from preventive diplomacy to peacemaking, a euphemism for intervention at an early stage.

Canada and Canadians invented the concept of "peacekeeping" and we will continue to advocate its use, along with preventive diplomacy, as a means to ease regional tensions and conflicts.