

instruments must remain subordinate to their own domestic legislation and practices on human rights. But that claim is progressively losing force as its advocates diminish in number and find themselves engaged in public reviews of their performance on human rights. A notable instance of that review occurred in Ottawa last summer when human rights experts met to review the human rights situation in CSCE countries and we fully expect a similarly open and vigorous scrutiny of the record in Berne in May on East/West contacts and exchanges.

But if we have standing in general, our grounds for intervening are stronger in some cases than in others - because of the development assistance or emergency relief we may have given a particular country, because of the refugees we may have harboured from a region in conflict, or because we may have longstanding human or other ties which underpin our interests and concerns.

And if our standing in some areas of the world is stronger than in others, it is also true that we are more likely to be effective if we are selective in targetting particular human rights cases rather than diffusing our efforts too greatly.

All of which argues for a universal policy of support for human rights, with special attention focussed on those human rights situations where our standing is the strongest and the impact of our involvement likely to be the greatest.

Having focussed our efforts, we have finally to decide on our approach. I will not hide from you that governments, this one included, face a major problem in this respect.

Pressure against another can rarely be applied without cost. No government takes well to being pressured by others, particularly when the pressure is applied publicly and so places national reputations on the line. Very often the response is not compliance but defiance. In some instances retaliation can follow against the very people whose welfare is at stake. Usually the relationship with the regime in question is damaged, reducing influence in the future.

Nor is the inventory of means at the government's disposal a very large one. There are, of course, a variety of ways in which we can make our voice heard. But it is not enough just to be heard. Our voice must also count.

To achieve that may require some back-up, first in the form of promises of material rewards and penalties, later in the form of sanctions. None are implemented with ease.

Some have argued that our aid programs ought to take full account of the human rights record of countries receiving