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There is little agreement between governments of the West, the Communist bloc, and the developing world on the definition of human rights. The Communist world maintains that the rights of the state take precedence over the rights of the individual. In too many countries government power is used arbitrarily. Such repression is repugnant to our sense of values and inimical to our national interests. In the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe it undermines East/West relations. In Third World countries it encourages extremism, outside interference, and competition between East and West.

Canadians — private citizens, ethnic groups, unions, professional associations, as well as the government itself — have been very active in the defence of human rights and in the search for political stability with human dignity. It is a moral and political imperative that we continue to work towards these ends and that we keep our doors open to refugees.