

READERS' CORNER

We have started receiving your letters and are now able to feature this column—your column—in every issue of **Canada World View**. We thank you for your comments and hope you will keep on writing.*



Understandably, Kosovo captures most of the attention these days, particularly from our British Columbia readers:

KOSOVO

In my opinion, the UN should encourage women from both sides of the conflict to elect a panel of their peers to study ways and means toward an equitable or viable solution. It would be strictly consultative and apolitical. A sort of dialogue over the fence without preconditions. A dialogue along these lines could be arranged better with women. They are the ones with the children. Men are the ones with the guns.

HUBERT ROBERTIES / OLIVER, B.C.

I am concerned and deeply distressed at Canada's involvement in NATO and their current bombing diplomacy. Your magazine's article on human rights (No. 1, p. 8) states, "For half a century, Canada and Canadians have played a leading role in enshrining respect for human rights in international law." This is the role that Canada should play.

ROBERT J. WINKENHOWER / VICTORIA, B.C.

The United Nations is doing a good job in many fields and it does need the support of the rank and file. In the peacekeeping area, Canada has certainly been doing an outstanding job. I do have some misgivings about the action in Yugoslavia. How to stop the tyrant Milosevic and his murdering? Better if it could be handled by the UN rather than NATO. Hopefully, we can call a halt to the terrible destruction of property and life soon.

WILLIAM SLOANE / PILOT MOUND, MANITOBA

EAST TIMOR

As a concerned Canadian—currently living in Portugal—I take this opportunity to express my grave concern regarding a very serious matter that I believe is being overlooked due to the situation in the Balkans. I am referring to East Timor. Recent massacres carried out by armed pro-integration militias have caused the death of numerous Timorese people; children have been and are being slaughtered. It is my belief that Canada should request the urgent presence of the United Nations in East Timor to ensure that the security and freedom of these people are guaranteed.

RUI M. MAURICIO MARQUES / LISBON, PORTUGAL

MORE INFO, PLEASE

Could you publish more information on the Specialized Agencies of the United Nations system, their roles, initiatives and relevance to Canadian interests? Perhaps a simple chart of the total UN system, with concise information on each agency.

JOHN C. CAIRNS / ELORA, ONTARIO

[WE ARE NOTING THIS SUGGESTION. — ED.]

SEND YOUR LETTERS TO:

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* Please note that letters are condensed and edited for style.

Interview with

Canada's relationship with the countries of the Americas is growing at an unprecedented pace. Canadian trade missions—both federal and provincial—to the United States and Mexico, to Central and South America and to the Caribbean are multiplying. Political dialogue is expanding and new areas of co-operation are opening on a regular basis.

New partnerships at the political and commercial levels are being established, and a new understanding between Canada and the rest of the Americas is developing. In other words, a rewarding relationship is blossoming in the hemispheric neighbourhood.

Recently, **Canada World View** interviewed Secretary of State (Latin America and Africa) David Kilgour about some aspects of Canada's relations with the nations of Latin America and the Caribbean.

Canada World View

Canadian foreign policy gives a high priority to building strong links with the nations of the Americas. How important is that relationship to Canadians?

Mr. Kilgour

The relationship is immensely important to Canadians. Let me start with the bread-and-butter economic benefits—jobs and economic growth. The countries of Latin America and the Caribbean will soon have a combined population of half a billion and an aggregate GDP [gross domestic product] of US\$2 trillion. When you consider these figures and the fact that the average age of that population is 17 to 21, you realize how much of our economic future is linked to this hemisphere. Already the figures are impressive: our exports to the region doubled between 1992 and 1998, rising from \$3.3 billion to \$6.8 billion. Our investments in the same period soared amazingly, from about \$6 billion to \$28 billion.

Another benefit of these closer ties is the influence they give in shaping the collective policy of our neighbours in the hemisphere in ways that reflect Canadian values—for instance, in contributing to our common goal of improved regional security. A third advantage is our ability to enlist the support of our hemispheric neighbours for Canadian positions on various international issues. One recent example was the strong backing we received when Canada made its successful bid for membership on the UN Security Council. And one only needs to look at the six major hemispheric events Canada will be hosting over the 1999–2001 period for evidence of our commitment to our hemispheric relationship.