

term development of political, civil and cultural rights as it now contributes to long-term economic and social development through the aid program. By helping to build representative political and other institutions and strengthen processes that serve, directly or indirectly, to protect human rights, Canada can add an element of protection to the carrots and sticks of traditional human rights policy.

The assumption underlying development assistance policy has been that economic growth would enhance other forms of social and political development—including enhanced respect for human rights—more or less automatically. Experience has shown that although creating and distributing wealth is of fundamental importance to developing countries, economic development by itself does not resolve social and political tensions. It often increases them. Many countries in Latin America, for example, achieved rapid economic growth in the 1970s and, at the same time, suffered political polarization, instability and the plague of human rights violations.

The roots of this trouble lie partly in extreme inequalities and concentrations of economic and political power. They lie also in the failure of institutions to defend and promote the rights of the individual, of minority groups and of the community as a whole. Growing numbers of people throughout the world wish to strengthen representative political and other institutions as one means of ending the cycles of repression and instability that have beset them. Without regard to ideology, this struggle for the development of human rights aims to promote the freedom of individuals to organize in labour, academic, religious and political associations, the establishment of an independent judiciary, a free press and effective democratic institutions, and the holding of genuine elections with the broadest spectrum of political expression.

The importance of human rights and democratic development does not mean that international co-operation in this area is easy or always possible. Issues of this sort are often considered off-limits to outsiders, an attitude Canadians can well understand. The principal danger is that what is represented as international co-operation may in fact constitute interference or even intervention. Such interventions have had anti-democratic and repressive consequences in the Third World, whatever the rhetoric that accompanied them.

Experience has shown that these objections amount to a well founded caution about how international programs in human rights and democratic development should be designed and run. They should, in the first place, be co-operative—responding to the requests of others as they identify their own interests and needs.

Canada is not—and should not be—in the business of exporting its own institutions. It can and should be equipped to share its experience and to co-operate with others as they develop their own institutions. Such programs should enjoy the active support, or at least the acquiescence, of partner country governments and peoples. The most promising opportunities for co-operation would occur in countries like Argentina or the Philippines, which have embraced democracy after periods of authoritarian rule. Serious human rights offenders would no doubt disqualify themselves and seek to discourage their people from participating in Canadian programs to assist democratic development. In those cases, Canada should try, where possible, to encourage the building of links with non-governmental organizations seeking to promote democratic development.