

The situation is no different in Guatemala, where tens of thousands of Indians have been killed in the past decade for a presumed association with the country's guerrillas, and where human rights crimes continue under the civilian government of President Vinicio Cerezo Arevalo.

In today's edition of *The Toronto Star* we have the same. People have noticed that disappearances have continued since Guatemala returned to civilian rule, and some have noticed that death squad activity is on the rise again. The American Embassy in the spring indicated that death squads this year had doubled the rate of the death squads last year under the same President.

The Minister is also mistaken to call Guatemala a democratic country when that Government is also controlled by the army, by a Fascistic murderous army. The Minister has no basis for saying as quoted in today's *The Citizen*:

The election of Vinicio Cerezo as president of the country has resulted in the beginning of a democratic process.

He has no basis for saying:

Consequently, and in keeping with our conviction that the root causes for instability and violence in Central America are economic and social in nature, we have decided to renew Canada's bilateral aid relationship with Guatemala. We believe that with care and imagination it will be possible to organize a program that benefits the poor.

That is simply not based on the real facts. The Minister has never given me his reasons for the decisions he has been considering for over a year and which he has now announced.

Human rights violations go unpunished. Whether they were a little less last year or a little more this year makes no difference in El Salvador or in Guatemala. When I visited Guatemala a year and a half ago I saw Canadian aid in the form of corn given through Canadian NGOs to Guatemalan NGOs. I saw the corn being distributed by a member of the civil patrols. In other words, Canada's money was going to help confirm the dictatorial power of the Guatemalan army.

• (1815)

I commend the Hon. Minister for his plan to visit Central America. I believe it will be a useful thing for him to do. I hope he will visit Central America and visit it more than once to learn at first hand what is going on. I hope he will reconsider his decision to aid Guatemala and not make the same mistake he made in El Salvador, and that he will not fund the army that controls Guatemala.

[Translation]

**Mr. Jean-Guy Hudon (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State for External Affairs):** Madam Speaker, I have always felt the House of Commons was a tremendous forum, however one should exercise caution when making accusations. Clearly there has to be some facts behind the Hon. Member's comments, but they must be viewed within the general outlook and the general policy of the Government.

Human rights violations must be punished. I think that generally speaking, Madam Speaker, this may be said in this House but there is a lag between saying it and implementing

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it, and that lag indeed the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Clark) is attempting by every available diplomatic means to make sure that human rights are respected. We as a Government have very close links with all the agencies which deplore those facts and we are closely monitoring them. Our assistance program, Madam Speaker, are designed to reduce disparities. And it is my view that if we base our assistance program on human rights violations only, we might very well make mistakes that would prevent us from meeting that first goal of reducing inequalities.

That violations should be punished is a principle that can be stated but implementing it is a different story. Our programs are aimed at reducing those inequalities, and very soon, indeed next week, the Secretary of State for External Affairs will be touring those Central American countries to verify and I may say to verify and discuss with the authorities. This may be a way of doing things with which the Hon. Member may not entirely agree, but it is my view that in light of his visit, and it will be my privilege to also take part in that tour and discussions, but I think that in light of that visit and especially of those discussions with the Secretary of State, some points will be clearly established.

I have already attended similar meetings and on that I can state that there is a full range of means available. Rising in this House to violently condemn is one way. It solves nothing in San Salvador, Nicaragua or other countries. Ours is a very special forum that can be used sometimes, but I think there are other ways and we should not reduce our assistance on those grounds. Quite the opposite, our assistance is aimed at reducing inequalities. Examples such as those given by the Hon. Member may be true. There are examples in every country, including Canada, where people will attempt to abuse the system by every means. That is true. But for making diplomatic charges, voicing statements in this House with the sole purpose of stating that, we prefer solutions that are much more effective.

• (1820)

REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT—REGION OF MONTREAL—  
REQUEST FOR \$25 MILLION GRANT—GOVERNMENT  
POSITION—AID—GOVERNMENT POSITION

**Mr. Jean-Claude Malépart (Montreal—Sainte-Marie):** Madam Speaker, my intervention this evening follows a question I addressed to the Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion (Mr. de Cotret), who is supposedly responsible for economic development in the Montreal region. I should remind the House that, two years ago, after the announcement of the closing of Bombardier, Canadian Steel Wheel, Laforge, Daoust, La Parisette and Vickers, I established along with provincial and municipal political representatives, as well as the citizens and unions, a survival committee to avoid the loss of 5,000 jobs in East Montreal.

At the time, as this House will also recall, the Conservative Government had responded to our representations, and to the closing of the Gulf Refinery in East Montreal by announcing