

law. Canadians have upheld these values even when it was not in our immediate economic interests to do so.

There is no question, as we see from the shining example of Singapore, that stability is essential for economic advancement. However, we also believe that economic progress must be accompanied by political and social development.

The world increasingly expects not only economic leadership from ASEAN, but political and social leadership as well. As ASEAN countries continue their spectacular economic development, Canadians are encouraged by parallel progress in the areas of human rights and democratization. Peace, tolerance, freedom and respect for the individual are fundamental responsibilities of all governments -- and are precious rewards in their own right.

I recognize that there is often a need to balance individual rights with the collective rights of communities and of societies as a whole. Individuals have social duties and responsibilities to their societies, as well as having individual rights as citizens. We are, however, passionate believers in the principle of universality, of the inviolability of certain rights and freedoms, as expressed in the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

I want to underscore a comment [U.S.] Secretary [of State Warren] Christopher made earlier: regional and cultural variations simply cannot be used as a blind behind which a regime can justify torture, summary executions and the systemic disrespect of the rule of law. We are pleased to note great similarities between our views on this issue and those you expressed in your AMM statement last week.

In the end, the institutional disrespect for universal rights unravels the very fabric of a society. Without an acceptable balance between rights and duties, there can be no peace, either within or between nations. We have seen this in too many tragic cases from Bosnia to Burma, from Somalia to South Africa.

As we have in the past, we call once again upon the regime in Burma to restore democracy, to release all political prisoners, and to face up to the reality of change. Along with others we have called upon Burma to release Aung San Suu Kyi, and we renew this call today.

Let us be honest. Despite the appointment of a new chairperson, the State Law and Order Restoration Council in Burma has not demonstrated commitment to genuine reform in human rights and democratic development.