

It is hard to assess the precise effects of this rather "quiet diplomacy", but I know that it produces results in many cases, and that over time it serves to keep the government concerned fully aware of Canadian views. Since success depends often upon discretion, it is not an area in which the Department of External Affairs will ever be able to claim much credit for its efforts, but it is certainly a field in which departmental activities have increased greatly over the past ten years, and I think will continue to increase.

The Government of Canada is often told to limit development assistance to those developing countries in which the human rights situation gives cause for concern. We resist the invitation most of the time. By decreasing our bilateral assistance to express displeasure with the conduct of existing regimes, we might well indeed be prolonging and even adding to the hardship of the people we seek to assist, punishing them for the sins of their government. But there will be times when we will feel compelled to suspend bilateral assistance, as was done most recently in the cases of Guatemala and El Salvador. Such decisions must always be taken with considerable regret, in sorrow more than in anger, and only in extreme circumstances.

Indeed, in withdrawing assistance, we remove an important element in our influence for effecting gradual improvement in these matters.

Similar considerations must apply to Canada's voting for or against development programmes and projects of the World Bank or other international development and financial institutions, with the added consideration that these organizations are generally bound by their charters to consider only economic and technical, not political, criteria. It has been our policy to respect that rule, sometimes with a certain regret, and with the consolation that such projects take a long time to become realities, time which may allow for behavioural changes prompted by other external and internal influences. I think we must continue to follow this policy, if only to keep the international institutions from becoming battlegrounds for conflicting political pressures.

Conclusion

We have, I think, a record for the protection and promotion of human rights abroad of which we can be justly proud. Canada's able representatives in embassies and on human rights bodies abroad have credibility mainly because we are recognized as practising - generally speaking - what we preach.