

as this risk becoming the focus of East-West rivalry, the landscape on which the super-powers measure their gains and losses.

I don't want to convey any sort of neutrality in this regard. Along with our Western allies, Canada takes Soviet expansionism in the Third World and in this hemisphere very seriously. However, we are realistic enough not to be surprised that East-West rivalries see targets of opportunity in unstable Third World situations — particularly situations of extremes where the grinding poverty of the many is colocated with the extreme wealth of the few.

In many parts of Central America, and particularly in El Salvador, we see with shock and horror widespread violations of elementary human rights, atrocities, torture, massacres and murder on an appalling scale. These crimes against humanity are perpetrated by forces on both extremes of the political spectrum. The Canadian government continues to protest against this wave of violence.

But we cannot understand political terror in Central America, nor hope to resolve it, simply by blaming a clash of ideologies or great-power interests.

**Instability not
due to East-
West rivalry**

Here to me is the crux of the problem. Instability in Central America — and in most other cases in the Third World — is not a product of East-West rivalry. It is a product of poverty, the unfair distribution of wealth, and social injustice. Instability feeds on poverty and injustice. East-West rivalries flow in its wake. I can think of few examples where the process has been the other way around.

So when we look at Central America today, we cannot view this region exclusively through the prism of East-West rivalries because these are not at the root of the problem. Nor can we now view it uniquely through the prism of social and humanitarian concerns, because it is clear that East-West rivalries have now implanted themselves firmly in that region. This is an unfortunate fact to which we cannot close our eyes. It should also provide us with a sense of urgency concerning what can be done now to prevent this situation from developing elsewhere.

But in any event it is clear that looking at Central America exclusively in one or another of these ways warps the reality of the situation.

There are pressures in both directions — that is to view Central America exclusively as a social and humanitarian or as exclusively a security problem. These contribute to a foreign policy approach which is one-dimensional, allowing for no nuance or contradiction. Like a medieval morality play, good and evil players are identified and frozen forever into unrealistic positions. Those who oppose evil are naturally considered to be good. Those who are identified as good remain that way forever.

Such a one-dimensional view cannot provide the basis of a sound analysis of what is
