



convention, drug trafficking, the smuggling of people, and so on. These issues are priorities for Minister Axworthy and form the core of the human security agenda.

As a matter of fact, in Canadian foreign policy we can now say that the security of people is treated with the same concern and urgency as the security of states.

Canada World View

This raises the highly sensitive issue of the right of intervention in the affairs of other states. When is it appropriate to intervene and when not to? There seem to be contradictions in the way the principle is applied. What do you say to those who accuse Western democracies of inconsistency in putting the principle into practice?

Mr. Heinbecker

Obviously this is a difficult question. Let me begin by saying that humanitarian intervention is not just a Western concept. It is a human imperative, particularly when governments grossly abuse their own people, or when states fall and warlords prevail. Whether we want it or not, we are inevitably affected by these conflicts. First, the abuse of the innocent affronts our values and is in violation of the growing body of international humanitarian law. Second, we have a direct interest: we accept refugees, we send humanitarian assistance, we contribute peacekeeping troops, we help rebuild afflicted societies and rehabilitate their populations. When we see acute suffering and widespread loss of life, we have a moral obligation to respond and, if necessary, to intervene.

Having said that, it is important that the international community act collectively,

preferably through the UN, first to try to prevent a conflict and then to intervene to stop a conflict or gross abuse of human rights. The most difficult issue is whether to intervene when the Security Council is paralysed. There was no consensus in the Council to intervene in Rwanda in 1994, and a genocide ensued. There was no UN Security Council consensus to intervene in Kosovo in 1999, and NATO decided that it could not turn a blind eye to inhumanity on its doorstep.

Another difficulty is coherence. But consistency can never mean doing nothing because we cannot do everything. The international community helps where it can and over time gives itself the ability to expand its reach. That is why it is so important to ensure the effectiveness of the UN Security Council, including its political will to act. And we are working very hard at it.

Canada World View

Talking about future generations, how do you see the role of youth? Should they be involved in the human security agenda? Should they be educated to learn such values as tolerance, openness to other cultures and generosity?

Mr. Heinbecker

I think many of the conflicts and human rights abuses in the world are the result of attitudes that are taught in the home and in schools. If we want the world to

become more democratic and peaceful, we have to educate people in democratic values. And this starts at an early age. We also have to educate the educators. It does little good (in Kosovo, for example) if teachers on the opposing sides inculcate hatred in their students. I have no doubt that educating young people and involving them in human security activities will bring a better world.

YouthLinks [see article, p. 3] is an excellent example of this. I hope that other Canadian schools can become linked to schools in countries around the world. Our international internships are also important. In my view, they enhance global understanding and help to reduce tensions in the world.

The Internet revolution has the potential to become the single most important instrument of human security in the world. Let's put it to good use! ●—