is just how important is the role of the various social structures of authority in preventing violence. We must focus more clearly on the fact that part of any peacebuilding process involves restoring a destroyed or damaged authority structure as a means to advance a collective sense of trust, confidence and security within the population. We must also recognize that part of the challenge consists in providing a sound basis upon which the legitimacy of state institutions, including the legitimacy of social control and criminal justice institutions, can be rebuilt.

Violence in Often Rewarded

Describing one type of political violence as terrorism and another as emancipatory or legal - and therefore legitimate - is obviously subjective and political. When we look at the world around us, we can only observe that many social movements have managed to successfully used violence to grow in strength and to establish both social legitimacy and political influence. A recourse to terrorism has indeed served some groups very well. Violence is often rewarded.

The parameters of a particular peacebuilding initiative are often defined in the wake of a formal peace-agreement. However, many such agreements amount to a consecration of a political or territorial advantage obtained through violence and intimidation, and are therefore rarely fair to all parties. Most efforts to convince all sides in a recent conflict that violence does not pay-off and is not an appropriate way to resolve conflict contradict their own recent experience.

Ethnic and Religious Dimensions of Many Conflicts

Furthermore, it is worth noting here that most of the conflicts following which we are likely to intervene have ethnic or religious dimensions. These ethnic and religious dimensions of conflict have important implications for any peacekeeping and peacebuilding initiatives in which Canada is or may become involved. Minority rights conflicts and conflicts based on ethnic or religious identities are often associated with violence. Such violence can not realistically be expected to stop completely with the signing of a peace agreement or the promulgation of a new constitution. In most instances, the conflicts have deep roots in group identity and in belief systems.

One cannot hope to solve such conflicts overnight and should expect them to continue to complicate the peacebuilding process. What can be done, however, is to encourage the establishment of processes to ensure that all groups have a sense of representation and participation in the political life of their society. Bridges can thus be built progressively towards genuine mutual understanding between the various groups.

Four key policies have been identified based on the experience of countries that have tried to move in that direction. These are: devolution of power (obviously easier to achieve when