

deteriorate. While Canada should be more critical of the human rights violations perpetrated by the Cuban government, isolating the regime is not an answer. On the contrary, spaces within the well educated Cuban society exist where Canada's engagement may bring some positive results. There are people interested in change. Therefore, the policy of constructive engagement should be continued. However, it should be made clear that Cuba's policies on human rights are comparable to the most repressive criminal regimes of Latin America and are indefensible. Canada should push and cajole the Cuban government into changing attitudes by signing human rights conventions and opening up to domestic as well as international scrutiny.

Nick Rowe, commented that while the policy of constructive engagement made much sense a few years ago, it has completely failed. Fidel Castro demonstrated that the only time he is willing to relax his personal power is when it is threatened by riots. As soon as dissent is reigned in through semi-liberal economic policies or repression the thaw ends and liberalisation is reversed. Canada's ability to push and cajole is minimal. Therefore, a policy of strict economic conditionality should be implemented.

Mark Fried, said that Canadian foreign policy must be conceptualised in a broader "diplomatic" context. While symbolic acts may seem meaningless or seem to reinforce repression, they often open doors to actors that can have real impact. Canadian foreign policy is not only carried out by diplomats but also by NGOs, Canadian tourists and businesses. Therefore, constructive engagement may have been much more successful than one may think. There are Cubans working for a gradual change and Canada should be there to assist them.

John Kirk, also endorsed the Canadian approach. He argued that there is no doubt the Cuban government has been repressing human rights. However, Canada has an interest to positively influence the administration though any minimal means available. Over all, according to Kirk, constructive engagement has been balanced and productive. Despite some recent setbacks and disagreements on human rights, a number of CIDA and IDRC projects have been negotiated, trade has actually increased and the policy may have contributed to Canada's respected position in the OAS. The ultimate objective of Canadian foreign policy must be seen as a long term project.

Similarly Hal Klepak, Royal Military College, pointed out that rather than focussing on the nature of a country's regime, Canadian interests should be the *sine qua non* of Canadian foreign policy. Canada has always been engaged in Cuba, to varying degrees, and Cuba has always been a police state. Those who support good relations with the island do not necessarily condone the system. Constructive engagement does not lead to deterioration of human rights. The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade and the Department of National Defence have not been wrong in formulating Canada's stance. On the contrary, the danger of an explosion is real and bloodshed is possible (with potential U.S.A. intervention). Changing our approach now could only help the extremists.

Other points included an opinion that Cubans have a stake in the system and are not likely to endorse a massive structural change. Martha Thompson, Oxfam Canada, drew attention to