

This statement of objective adds a helpful point of reference to the aim of protecting and promoting the interests of Canadian citizens abroad and gives it a positive orientation. For greater precision, however, some further development of the basic ideas--the privileges to be promoted and the rights to be protected--is desirable.

Promotion of the interests of Canadians abroad, or helping and assisting them, as the VCCR puts it, can clearly be very broad in scope, referring more to optional services--privileges--than to obligatory acts related to the concept of rights. There are limits to the kind of interests that can be promoted. Logic suggests that it would not be proper for a consular officer to promote the interests of a Canadian seeking to buy drugs for trafficking purposes--an illegal act in Canada--even if the production and sale of the drugs were not illegal in the foreign country concerned. By the same token it would be improper for a consular officer stationed in a country where the production and sale of alcoholic beverages were illegal to promote the interests of a Canadian seeking an export market for Canadian whiskey.

Apart from a limitation specifying that the interests to be promoted must not be illegal either in Canada or the receiving country, it is possible to add to a general statement on the promotion of the interests of Canadians a phrase which would help in the determining of priorities. Consular assistance is surely particularly appropriate where the activities of the consular client happen to support and extend the national interest either through the expansion of trade, the establishment of cultural or scientific links or the pursuit of social justice.

Protection of the interests of a Canadian citizen abroad is an act in protection of Canadian sovereignty as represented in the person of one of its citizens. Since an act of protection of this kind takes place within the jurisdiction of a foreign sovereign state, it is, in some slight measure, an abridgement of the sovereignty of that state. International custom permits only a very limited abridgement of this kind. Protection can therefore be expressed only in the most limited terms.

International law recognizes that a consul may make formal interventions to the local authorities with a view to protecting a fellow-citizen against discrimination in the administration of justice in the receiving state. The Canadian government would no doubt consider that it has an obligation to extend this much protection to one of its citizens, though the obligation is nowhere explicitly stated. There are three other types of protection for Canadian citizens which entail little if any abridgement of the