

assistance, and for co-ordination of human rights activities throughout the UN system. I would like to know your thoughts on how this new position can be made as effective as possible because the challenge we face now is to give practical effect to this mandate, to integrate the activities of the High Commissioner and other human rights mechanisms into the UN's political, security and developmental work and into the preventive, peacekeeping and peace-building operations of the organization.

I emphasize this last point because one of my strong convictions, based on my wide travels this past year as Secretary of State for Latin America and Africa, is that peace and security are inextricably linked with the challenge of ensuring respect for human rights.

This is a two-way street. War and civil unrest clearly produce major violations of human rights at the most basic level. We all remember the flood of refugees fleeing Rwanda last summer. Our television screens were filled with the horrible pictures of men, women and children dying of cholera in the mud of the refugee camps, and many more who were massacred at home and continue to be threatened now. At the same time, it is often unchecked violations of human rights that lead to such tragic conflicts in the first place.

Consequently, my personal belief is that while the nations of the world cannot always intervene to stop these human tragedies, governments with a concern for human rights, such as our own, must turn their attention to the area of conflict prevention and mediation. This has traditionally been the role of the peacekeepers, but more and more, those of us who travel to distant parts of the world for our government are convinced that the "soft" end of conflict prevention - the early warning, the mediation, the confidence building and education - needs to be developed.

The interplay between human rights and conflict prevention has been outlined ambitiously by the UN Secretary-General in his *Agenda for Peace*. Most of you know this important document, but many of you may not know Minister Ouellet's statement in Ouagadougou, the Prime Minister's comments in Budapest, or my own at the Miami Summit, which directly link Canadian concerns for human rights to new thinking and new initiatives on conflict prevention. Now we as a government, and groups such as your own, need to co-operate with the many communities concerned with this issue to design strategies, fund and act to put conflict prevention together with human rights on the agenda.

The tragedies in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia underline the importance of human rights in early warning and preventive diplomacy. We must continue our efforts to strengthen these linkages at the Commission - for example, in the resolutions on