

- providing travel advice in times of civil unrest or natural disaster and facilitating the evacuation of Canadians, if that becomes required.

These are some of the many services we provide. Knowledge of them will help Canadians enjoy a safer and more secure stay abroad.

But it is also important that Canadians realize the real limits which exist on the services we can provide or the influence we can exert. Much of the responsibility rests squarely on the shoulders of Canadians themselves. Our missions cannot pay bills or cash cheques or provide loans. Our missions are not travel agencies; they cannot make travel arrangements at will. Our missions are not firms. They cannot provide legal advice or post bail or pay fines. And our missions are not employment agencies to help Canadians get work abroad.

Many of these limits reflect the basic reality that when Canadians are in another country, they are subject to the laws of that country. We insist on the application of Canadian law to everyone inside our own borders. We would reject interference from others outside. It is not different for other countries. We may dislike laws elsewhere and find them extreme or unjust. But those are the laws there. Those are the laws Canadians must obey. No one can be happy with the fact that there are some 450 Canadians now in prison abroad, some waiting years for trial, others subject to terrible conditions. Prison cells can be primitive, open to the elements and shared with several people. Some of those who knowingly committed crimes are facing the consequences. Others transgressed the law through ignorance or irresponsibility. Consular officials can visit those Canadians and try to ensure they are treated fairly under local laws. But there is often little else we can do. That is reality.

A particular problem relates to drug-related offences. There are far too many Canadians languishing in overseas prisons for this reason, some as young as 16 years of age. Canadians must recognize that going abroad makes them more, not less vulnerable to serious punishment and that there is often little recourse after conviction. In 1986, as an example, two young Australians were executed abroad for drug crimes, despite repeated representations by their government. A Canadian passport is not a carte blanche for crime or an insurance policy against conviction. By far the best protection is to know the laws abroad and to obey them.

Those in consular services deal with very human problems. Their work requires compassion. Sometimes it wrenches the soul. How many of us, for example, would relish being called to identify the body of a Canadian traveller? How many would feel no emotion at visiting a young Canadian student just imprisoned