

Similarly, rather than cutting off aid completely, we will often alter the type of aid given. When a regime becomes a systematic, gross and continuous abuser of human rights, we may cease to deal through that regime. But we will not cease to deal with the people, as long as they can be reached. We will not cause them to suffer more than they suffer already. So we work through Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and churches and local organizations where possible to allow assistance to get through without assisting those governments. I do not pretend that this always works perfectly or that the choice is easy. But I do believe that it is the only approach that is correct.

Sixth, we must provide the practical tools and expertise to make democracy work and to assist in the observance and strengthening of human rights. That can be done bilaterally and multilaterally. That can involve election observers, constitutional experts, human rights monitors, ballot boxes and books.

It is for this reason that this year alone Canada assisted in elections in Romania, Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia. That is why we are assisting Benin as it moves towards democracy. That is why we worked with the UN in sending observers and RCMP officers to Namibia. That is why we are offering constitutional expertise to both black and white in South Africa. That is why we have sent election observers to Malaysia through the Commonwealth, why we participated in the OAS and UN efforts in Nicaragua, why we are working with both those organizations in Haiti and why we are prepared to assist the UN in constructing democracy in the Western Sahara and Cambodia.

Multilaterally, we have moved to make democracy and human rights a feature of regional organizations which have great potential in building confidence and trust in so many parts of the world. At the first Annual Assembly we attended as members of the Organization of American States, we proposed a Unit for Democratic Development. That proposal was accepted and we are pursuing similar ideas within the Commonwealth and la Francophonie. And in Europe, we took the lead in Copenhagen at the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) Conference on Human Dimension in proposing strengthened commitments to the rule of law and the rights of minorities and proposed that NATO assume a role in sharing its democratic experiences with its old adversaries in the East.

Those are practical steps. They are not grand designs and they do not in and of themselves convert despotism into democracy or torture into tolerance. But they are steps that move us forward. They are designed to educate, to build institutions, to build trust and, in so doing, to make the roots of democracy stronger and to strengthen the observance of human rights.