

So when we look at Central America today, we cannot view this region exclusively through the prism of East-West rivalries because these are not at the root of the problem. Nor can we now view it uniquely through the prism of social and humanitarian concerns, because it is clear that East-West rivalries have now implanted themselves firmly in that region. This is an unfortunate fact to which we cannot close our eyes. It should also provide us with a sense of urgency concerning what can be done now to prevent this situation from developing elsewhere.

But in any event it is clear that looking at Central America exclusively in one or another of these ways warps the reality of the situation.

There are pressures in both directions - that is to view Central America exclusively as a social and humanitarian or as exclusively a security problem. These contribute to a foreign policy approach which is one-dimensional, allowing for no nuance or contradiction. Like a medieval morality play, good and evil players are identified and frozen forever into unrealistic positions. Those who oppose evil are naturally considered to be good. Those who are identified as good remain that way forever.

Such a one-dimensional view cannot provide the basis of a sound analysis of what is happening in Central America. Nor can any eventual solution to the conflict be a workable one unless it fully addresses both these major elements in a comprehensive way.

I believe that the states in the region have the right to choose to follow whatever ideological path their peoples decide. I don't believe that when a country chooses a socialist or even Marxist path it necessarily buys a "package" which automatically injects it into the Soviet orbit. This, I think, is where our views and those of the USA may diverge. The internal systems adopted by countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, whatever these systems may be, do not in themselves pose a security threat to this hemisphere. It is only when countries adopt systems which deliberately link themselves to outside forces or seek to destabilize their neighbours that a threat is posed. Canada has adopted a flexible approach in this regard. For example, we have not shifted our aid programs or our support because a régime has moved to the left in its internal affairs.

To take one example, Canada continued aid to Cuba up until the point when Cuba decided that it could afford the luxury of despatching expeditionary forces to Africa. Clearly it then had no more need for Canadian aid, given its new priorities. Consequently, we stopped giving Canadian aid.