

We are past that now. Not everywhere. Not in China. Not in some other places in Asia or Africa, but in virtually all of Latin America and all of Europe.

This is enormous news. However, the gains are fragile. But our government is determined to assure completion of this extraordinary revolution toward universal human rights and to make them secure.

We are activists on these matters because we believe that it is the right thing to do. And the majority of the Canadian public supports us in these initiatives.

There are always some who believe we can remain indifferent to what happens inside other countries as long as it doesn't affect us negatively. They may say: "Let's sell to them, even give them aid (particularly if that helps our sales)." And when conflict and killing occur, as in Yugoslavia, Azerbaijan, Haiti or Somalia, just to mention our agenda for this week, the passivists and cynics say, "It's sad, but things are sad; just make sure it doesn't get out of hand or beyond their borders over there."

This view is absolutely wrong.

The Need to Act -- Yugoslavia

There is a real need to act. For example, 6,000 people have died in the Yugoslav civil war, mainly in Croatia but on all sides. It has been a war of ethnic majorities against minorities.

In September, our prime minister was the first who called for a UN peacekeeping force -- the first to say that this was not an internal affair of state, exempt from humanitarian intervention, but, instead, the intolerable oppression of the weak by the strong.

That peacekeeping force is now on its way. The process of protecting people by securing basic rights is beginning, by negotiation, by declaration and by the rule of law.

The Need to Intervene -- Nagorno Karabakh

In the once autonomous Soviet region of Nagorno Karabakh, Azeris and Armenians are responding to the collapse of totalitarianism by lining up to kill each other, individual against individual, religion against religion -- unless the world can stop it.

The mandate of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE), of which both Armenia and Azerbaijan are members, is precisely the promotion of human rights and the management of conflict.