

Ultimately, it is the impact that we have on the individual citizen -- here and in other countries -- that must be the supreme test of our words or actions, our success or failure.

Our foreign policy is very much geared to the interests and values of individuals. Key among these values are

- the conviction that democratic values and institutions, and respect for human rights, are universal and are essential to social and economic progress in any country;
- an unshakable commitment to the rule of law;
- insistence on responsible decisions by duly elected governments, and responsive and accountable programs by public administrators;
- a fundamental belief in the virtues of the free and orderly movement of people, ideas, goods, services and capital;
- the willingness to share our wealth and expertise with less fortunate countries to help them on the road to development and prosperity; and
- the resolve to assume our fair share of the responsibility for peace and security in the community of nations.

These clearly are ideals -- noble objectives that we adhere to in times when ideals seem stuck behind some opaque cloud and objectives seem far from achievable. The same is true at home: strong values and noble objectives, obscured by very real problems and everyday concerns. But let us remind ourselves that these values have brought us a long way -- at home and internationally. These are the same values that Canadians have used to build our own communities, our own country -- to give ourselves and our children, for all our difficulties, a quality of life that is second to none.

I am struck by how many countries see Canada as a model of freedom and justice and respect for diversity -- and, not surprisingly, a model they wish to emulate. It is amazing when I am abroad how often I am asked, "How do you do it?" "Can you help?" "Can you send us someone?"

One of the greatest challenges we face in today's world is the need to help people of Central and Eastern Europe consolidate their new-found political, social and economic freedom. Many of these countries are on a roller coaster of change. They need principles and skills, structures and institutions, constant work -- all at once -- when we have had the luxury of time in building our human rights, our economy and our democracy.