

cedure for dealing with gross and persistent violations of human rights, while other bodies, like the new Human Rights Committee, on which there is a Canadian, and the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, consist of independent experts serving in their personal capacities. The Canadian Government as such, can, therefore, take no official action in these bodies.

In the absence of consensus and of effective enforcement machinery at the international level, therefore, we have been forced to rely upon other methods, essentially political and diplomatic, in which to convey to other governments our concerns about human rights. Canada can use multilateral bodies, such as the Commission on Human Rights, to make known our attitude towards events in other countries; at such meetings, we can vote on resolutions varying in tone and substance from mild requests for information to denunciations and condemnations.

Multilateral bodies may impose sanctions dealing with trade, aid or trade in specific types of goods; such sanctions may be legally binding (as are Security Council sanctions) or voluntary (as are resolutions of the General Assembly). States may, of course, also impose sanctions unilaterally or jointly with other states, by curtailing aid, ending trade relations, or by going as far as suspending diplomatic relations. We can also make direct representations on a bilateral basis; such representations may range from expressions of concern, to requests for redress of specific grievances, to formal protests.

But there are no firm and fixed rules for raising and discussing what are essentially the domestic concerns of other states; some countries simply refuse categorically to permit any exchange of views. Canadians are justifiably indignant at flagrant abuses of the fundamental rights of the individual in Uganda, South Africa and in many other countries in Eastern Europe, Latin America and elsewhere. Moral indignation alone, however, will not establish universal standards of human rights, or ensure the creation of machinery to enforce such rights.

Courses of action

My problem, as SSEA, goes one step further: it is to find, amid the differing

interests, attitudes and traditions of other states, a way of expressing Canadian concerns, of alleviating conditions we find deplorable, and of solving the largely anonymous individual cases in which the Canadian interest is strong and persistent.

When we approach the issue of raising human rights questions with other countries, we generally consider two criteria in arriving at a course of action: the first is, what action will likely be *effective*; the second is, whether an action would be *appropriate*; whether our action, if taken, will be effective has to be subject to balanced and careful examination.

When we have cordial relations with states, for example, low-key, private discussions are demonstrably more likely to resolve outstanding individual difficulties, and, in turn, create the atmosphere for the additional reconciliation of problems of concern to Canadians. When relations are poor, and progress on human rights issues is negligible, it may be necessary to make our case public, even though public pressure can as often contribute to a hardening of attitudes as it may to a meeting of minds.

The difference between "public" and "private" diplomacy is not always appreciated by Canadians. Public support for dissidents in the Soviet Union may, for example, be of help to their cause, for it provides the very publicity that in turn prevents Soviet authorities from implementing more repressive measures. Just last month, for instance, it was decided to convey to the Government of the Soviet Union the disappointment and deep concern of the Canadian people at the arrest of certain prominent Soviet citizens who had been speaking out on the question of human rights.

Similarly, I spoke in the House of Commons just the other day on the human rights climate in Uganda. Our concerns in this area were made quite clear to the Government of Uganda, and at the recently-concluded session of the UN Commission on Human Rights. With respect to Uganda, let me say this: there is no question that the Ugandan Government is engaged in the systematic killing of those who are thought to be in opposition to it. Yet the international community has taken no action. The Commission on Human Rights was eventually willing to de-

vote a great deal of its time in open session expressing its "profound indignation" at events in Chile, but was not prepared to voice even the mildest public criticism of the situation in Uganda. The Canadian delegation introduced a resolution urging the Ugandan authorities to accept an impartial, international investigation. This was a reasonable position, consistent not only with previous Canadian action, but also with accepted international practice, which requires respect for national sovereignty. But so great was the opposition to our resolution that we were forced to allow it to stand without vote rather than have it summarily rejected in secret session, where, under the rules of the Commission, none of the proceedings can be reported.

Double standard exists

I might add that many of the same countries that protected Uganda from any meaningful criticism in the UN Commission on Human Rights, and refused to associate themselves with a U.S. resolution on Soviet dissidents, are loud in defence of human rights elsewhere. A double standard in the human rights field is an unhappy fact of international life. For its part, the Canadian Government will refuse to accept the conclusion of the Commission that it has discharged its responsibilities satisfactorily. We intend to continue to press, at the UN and in other bodies, for meaningful and concrete action to bring the Government of Uganda — among others that have persistently violated the international standards of behaviour in human rights — to observe the obligations they have freely accepted.

But public discussion of particular family-reunion cases in Eastern Europe, on the other hand, could have severe repercussions, because the people concerned do not have the protection afforded by the international spotlight, and would have no recourse if Canadian efforts to secure reunion in Canada were blocked as result of public discussion. Here we have opted for "private" diplomacy, and I am happy to report that, in most countries of Eastern Europe, we have seen a marked increase in the number of reunited families.

Pressure to speak out is always

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