

the practices of the Soviet Union, or of South Africa, or El Salvador or Nicaragua are internal to those countries, and no business of ours. Canada rejects that view. We signed and support the International Declaration of Human Rights, the Helsinki Accord, and other Agreements which assert the primacy of human rights.

As a democracy, tracing our traditions from the Magna Carta, we are particularly offended by the denial of basic rights in countries that claim to practice democracy, and to share our traditions, as South Africa claims.

Indeed, we accept the scrutiny and judgement of other countries regarding our own performance, and one of the early actions of the Mulroney Government was to change a provision of our Indian Act which contravened that part of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights relating to sexual discrimination against women.

As a practical matter, no part of foreign policy is more difficult than deciding when and how to react to human rights abuses. We can be proud of the fact that few countries have standards as high as our own, and fewer still are as consistent as Canada in respecting our own standards, including in our foreign policy. If we refused absolutely to deal with countries who do not meet all our high standards, we would not deal with many countries. Our trade would plunge, our development assistance dry up; our embassies close. We would become a nation of impeccable standards and no influence. The challenge becomes to decide whether Canada's presence, or Canada's absence, will do more to advance human rights in particular cases. Those judgements are always controversial.

Just last month, demonstrators criticized me for resuming limited Canadian aid to El Salvador, where abuses of rights continue. Ironically, that same week, the Special Representative of the United Nations Committee on Human Rights reported significant improvements in the human rights situation in that country.

Nowhere is the judgement of the appropriate balance in Canadian policy more difficult than in the question of our relations with the Soviet Union. Soviet violations of basic human rights and fundamental freedoms are well known. Many of the rights and freedoms we take for granted in the West are limited, controlled, or even denied in the Soviet Union. Freedom of conscience,