

*International Relations*

pling of its refugee population in the past few years, is of particular concern and led to the convening of the conference in Geneva in April, in which I participated, on the subject of international assistance to refugees in Africa. At that conference Canada pledged, in this year alone, a \$22 million contribution towards the longer term requirements of \$1 billion to assist in humanitarian relief, and local reinstallation and possibly eventual repatriation of the five million refugees in question.

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There are also major unresolved refugee situations in Central Asia, in Southeast Asia and in Latin America. These situations, apart from the grave humanitarian problems for the refugees involved, impose economic, social and political burdens on the countries providing asylum which tend to undermine the stability of the countries and regions affected. It is for this reason that Canada, while contributing in a major way to the humanitarian relief effort, has led the international efforts at the United Nations General Assembly, the UN High Commission for Refugees, the UN Commission on Human Rights, and within the economic summits to address the fundamental political and human rights problems which underlie most of the situations of massive exodus.

My department has further initiatives under consideration. I want to emphasize in particular my pleasure at the agreement of Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan to serve as special rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the question of the relationship of massive exoduses and human rights abuses. This particular exercise is the result of a Canadian initiative, and during my visit to Geneva in April I assured the Prince of Canada's strongest support for his sensitive mission.

I am pleased that my colleague the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Mr. Axworthy) will be able to participate in this debate today, elaborating on his department's concern over the question of resettlement of refugees from the Latin American region.

I spoke yesterday of the over-all importance to Canada of its trading relationships and the growth of trade with the Third World. Latin America provides a dramatic illustration: in 1979, five of our top 25 trading partners were developing countries in the western hemisphere.

In development assistance terms, in Central America, despite the absence of close political ties, Canada has recognized the pressing needs of the region and has been a leading aid donor, providing more than \$60 million in bilateral aid since 1972. In terms of concentration, Honduras and El Salvador, as the poorest of the area, have received the largest portion of the funding.

I should like finally to deal with that illustrative part of the motion which calls on the government "to initiate steps aimed at establishing a negotiated settlement of the tragic civil war in El Salvador".

Canada's links with El Salvador in terms of historic, linguistic, cultural, commercial and other ties, are limited in comparison to those of other countries in the world or, indeed, in

the western hemisphere. There are only 40 Canadians resident in that country and immigration has been about 100 per year. Canadian investments total less than \$10 million and exports in 1980 were only \$15 million. Our major involvement is in the aid field and even here all new planning has had to be halted because of the violence.

Although our direct links with El Salvador have historically not been great, this does not mean that Canada is not concerned at developments in El Salvador, in particular at the high level of violence and the continuing disregard for human rights which characterize the political scene. In dealing with these issues, our policy has been clear and consistent.

Canada's opposition to the supply of arms to competing forces in El Salvador was spelled out in my speech in the House of March 9. Canada's abhorrence of human rights violations has been and continues to be emphasized both in bilateral contacts and in multilateral forums. We also continue to believe that a political solution should be sought for El Salvador.

President Duarte of El Salvador has called elections for a constituent assembly for 1982. He has invited all political parties to register for the elections, including extremist groups willing to lay down their arms. He has indicated a willingness to open a dialogue with the left on the election process and the monitoring of it. He has also made clear that he would not negotiate the formation of a non-elected coalition government and has said that he would not accept mediation offers by third parties, whether from regional states such as Venezuela and Mexico or from the Socialist International, which is committed to aiding the Democratic Revolutionary Front, the FDR.

The leader of the NDP has said that he shares the feeling of the FDR that the elections proposed by the junta would be a travesty of democracy in current circumstances, not a viable political solution to the conflict. This view is not shared by many of Canada's friends in the area, such as Venezuela and Costa Rica.

We agree that the obstacles to holding elections are formidable. After all, El Salvador has no tradition of democratic rule and is beset by violent armed opposition from extremists of both left and right, none of whom has any real interest in seeing the implantation of liberal democracy.

It should also be recognized that there are many within the power structure of El Salvador, particularly in the security forces, who are not happy with the prospect of elections. President Duarte has made great progress in obtaining their agreement to abide by the will of the population as expressed in the elections called for 1982 and 1983. There is no doubt, however, that if the President were forced into negotiating the formation of a non-elected coalition government or some other form of power sharing as advocated by the FDR and the leader of the NDP, he could well be overthrown and the prospects for the institution of true democracy spoiled.

President Duarte's reluctance to be drawn into negotiations with the left is also understandable in the light of information