

As a priority, we must seek international action and consider as well bilateral action when there is reliable evidence that the grossest of human rights violations are systematically perpetrated. We should act where there is evidence of genocide, mass murder and widespread repression, or evidence of a government intentionally depriving a group or a region of basic resources for survival.

Apart from these extreme cases, there is also a place for Canadian action in serious human rights situations of direct concern to Canadians and where close links of one nature or another exist. We can in such cases, where reliable evidence exists, examine whether there is some action, apart from multilateral action, which the Government can take to seek improvement in the situation. We must bear in mind that if we seek to rectify isolated abuses or aberrations in a state's normal performance in the human rights field, there may be prospects for progress. But if we seek to alter a firm policy or the fundamental basis of another state's society, the issue is not likely to be resolved quickly or easily. It is not desirable to generalize on the circumstances in which action should be taken or the means by which it should be taken. Each situation must be examined on its own merits and in light of the level of direct Canadian interest.

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UN urged to act

Action in the United Nations cannot be divorced from action outside the United Nations. Canada's relations with some countries are limited or indeed non-existent, and there are therefore few possibilities for quiet diplomacy. I have in mind the cases of Uganda and Democratic Kampuchea. In the first case, our action at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting was followed up with pressure for action in the Human Rights Commission. In the second, after an on-the-spot enquiry carried out by Canadian officials among Kampuchean refugees, we provided a detailed report to the Human Rights Commission and called for action. I then spoke out in strong terms in the United Nations and called for action both by the General Assembly and by the Human Rights Commission. We had concluded that the self-imposed isolation of the Kampuchean Government made it essential to take unusually strong steps. We felt compelled to urge the interna-

tional community to pay heed to the tragic situation prevailing in that beleaguered country.

We are keeping a close watch on the situation in Kampuchea and, as a member of the UN Human Rights Commission, will continue to seek a full investigation of the situation and corrective measures. In the interim, it is interesting to note that the Kampuchean Government has invited the Secretary-General to visit Kampuchea. We hope it is a sign that it has accepted the validity of international concerns about the systematic murder and repression of its citizens. We will continue to spare no effort in multilateral fora and in our bilateral contacts with influential countries in the area — countries such as China — to urge them to exert their influence in the interest of improving the situation in Kampuchea and in the whole Southeast Asia area.

Help for refugees

Canada has a special national interest in seeking action in situations as serious as that of Kampuchea. Tragic human rights situations frequently trigger a major outflow of people from countries where the grossest violations are occurring. Massive financial and material resources are required for emergency humanitarian assistance to the destitute refugees and displaced persons from such situations. The Canadian Government, with the strong support of the Canadian public, has always played a full part in contributing to international emergency relief operations. It has supported the subsequent efforts of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to bring about resettlement of the refugees. The first preference is that refugees be returned to their countries of origin if improved conditions can be obtained, or as a second alternative settled in the neighbouring countries of refuge if conditions permit. But if as a last resort homes must be found for them in third countries, only a small number of countries, and primarily Canada, the United States and Australia, are able to accommodate a refugee inflow. Since the Second World War, Canada has resettled more than 350,000 of these persecuted and displaced persons.

Aid, trade and human rights

Canadians often complain to me that the Government is not doing enough to help individuals in countries where they have

relatives or friends. They frequently call upon the Government to cut all existing ties — economic, cultural and political — with the country in question. Generally speaking, this is not desirable. To attempt to make any impression bilaterally on the attitudes of other governments, we must be able to exert influence. We cannot do so by rhetoric alone. We can sometimes do so more effectively by making use of existing ties. On the other hand, we can and do take actions which reflect moral judgments.

Our development assistance program is designed to help meet the basic human needs of the poorest people in the poorest countries. Those living in countries whose human rights standards are low are usually helpless to change the situation of the regime which governs them. Our program is therefore governed by humanitarian and developmental criteria. Human rights considerations are nonetheless a factor in determining levels of aid and the orientation of programs. We must also consider in each case whether a country with an extremely poor record in terms of human rights has the will or is in a position to implement aid programs in accordance with Canadian objectives. Thus, on a few occasions when the human rights situation in a country has deteriorated to a stage where the effective implementation of the aid program is made extremely difficult, Canadian assistance has been suspended or not renewed.

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...The Canadian Government has not traditionally used unilateral economic measures as a tool to put pressure on a given country. Our policy takes into account not only the economic interests of Canadians, but also the fact that in few countries is Canadian trade critical to the regime. Therefore, Canada trades in peaceful goods with all countries except any against which the UN Security Council has imposed mandatory sanctions.

Human rights considerations do enter into the question of Canadian arms sales. We do not export arms either to countries where there is an immediate threat of hostilities or to regimes considered wholly repugnant to Canadian values. This is especially true where the equipment in question could be used against civilians....

There is no reason to expect...that, given the political will, the major human rights problems of this century cannot... be dealt with....