

there continue the possibility and great danger of violence, oppression of minorities and violation of basic human rights.

Our purpose must be to help tilt the balance and to aid peoples to embrace and prepare for democracy according to laws rooted in fundamental human rights and according to the principles of good governance.

Human Rights are the Goal

The quest for universal human rights is not new. Thomas Jefferson, John Stuart Mill, Leo Tolstoy, Eleanor Roosevelt, Martin Luther King, René Cassin, and many other -- often anonymous -- fighters, martyrs and tireless workers, including Canadians such as John Humphrey and John Diefenbaker, all worked diligently to achieve this goal.

What is new is the world revolution that has now created the possibility of extending these rights to almost all the world's citizens.

Canada's Role

In 1992, we must bring to bear the full force of Canadian diplomacy on the interrelated issues of human rights, democracy and good governance, all within the rule of law. Canada's role must be to ensure that this possibility becomes a reality.

At the highest level, we do so as idealists, out of concern for fundamental justice. As a country, we also declare and validate our own experience -- the need to build a tolerant society based on rules of law in which every person knows his or her inherent worth and in which guaranteed rights represent the first responsibility of government.

We also act out of a need for world security. We know that real and lasting security will come not from monolithic systems that clamp down on millions of lives, but from free and open societies.

Rights without Borders

There is growing consensus that what goes on inside a country's frontiers cannot be considered entirely an internal affair, beyond the legitimate interest of the world community.

Under this doctrine of non-intervention in the sovereign rights of nations, we witnessed the cynicism of Communist regimes, which composed article after article in constitutions guaranteeing the rights of citizens, only to crush them daily in practice according to the same constitutions.