

(2) Given the current resistance in Cuba to fundamental change, the Group recommends that Canadian policy focus on the long term evolution of the Cuban political system rather than expect dramatic short-term improvements.

(3) Canada should, however, continue to react publicly and privately to the arrest of dissidents and the curtailing of community organizations, as well as continue to press for the release of political prisoners, but not in a way that would hamper programs in Cuba of such organizations as Oxfam. Canada should use the leverage available to it through trade, investment, tourism and general political approach to promote human rights improvements.

(4) Cuba is the only formally non-democratic state in the Americas and should not be accorded more importance than it warrants in relation to major countries in Latin America on which Canadian foreign policy should be focused.

Arising from the Cuba discussion:

(5) The Group of 78 regrets the invitation to President Fujimori of Peru to visit Canada this fall in view of his authoritarian tendencies as illustrated in recent action by the Fujimori-dominated Congress to remove judges of the Constitutional Court and to prevent a referendum on whether he could run for a third term. The Canadian Government should impress on President Fujimori our disappointment at recent events in Peru and Canadian support for democratic processes in that country, including an independent judiciary and the delegation of power to elected local authorities.

3. The Commonwealth and Nigeria

The promise of a return to democracy in Nigeria, ending years of an abusive dictatorship, gives Canada the opportunity of helping to assure free and fair elections for the legislature in December and the presidency in February. The following steps should be taken immediately:

1. Canada can use money from the Democratic Development funds of CIDA to support civil society in Nigeria in mobilizing for the elections. The Group of 78 welcomes Minister Axworthy's statement of August 24 promising to sponsor a forum for pan-Commonwealth NGOs to give guidance to this process. Canada should encourage participation of all Nigerian groups, including the military, in the election process and in subsequent political arrangements.

2. Canada can take advantage of the coming meeting of the Commonwealth Ministerial Assistants Group to promote a strong Commonwealth contribution.

3. The services of Elections Canada should be made available.

4. Canada should offer strong participation in election monitoring.

Canada should await the success of the Nigerian elections, and the formation of a democratic government, before restoring full Canadian diplomatic representation. Canada should urge the Commonwealth to be prepared to lift the suspension of Nigerian membership, and to end all sanctions, when the new democratic government has been formed -- but not before.