

that others value. A community's right to stable order, perhaps. Or a country's right to non-intervention by others. Or a poor society's "right to development," as it has been called. None of this is to diminish the significance, or the universality, of rights recognized in Canada's Charter (or in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights). The issue, nevertheless, is whether the human rights understood by Canadians can be—or should be—balanced with other sorts of rights understood in some Asia-Pacific countries. The norm of non-intervention carries special authority among many Asian governments; in part it explains why some of the otherwise alarming security threats have so far been managed by discreet bilateral diplomacy in preference to public or multilateral confrontation. To repeat: Rights are more complex, less absolute, than we sometimes think.

- As a case in point, should Canadians pressure foreign governments to respect freedom of the press and other media? Canadians easily recognize that freedom of the media, derived from the larger freedom of expression that belongs to everyone, is an essential of democracy. We readily interpret police intimidation of journalists, arbitrary censorship, and state-administered media monopolies as threats to a free society and democratic government. But Canadians are also familiar with cultural sensitivities—with a shared desire to create and manage our own communications media safe from interference by powerful outsiders. Should we tell Singaporeans or Malaysians how much independence they must allow their newspapers and television stations? Are we entitled to withhold aid or trade from a state that fails to satisfy Canadian