

**Human Rights in Canadian Foreign Policy:  
From Principle to Practice**

by

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**B.A. (Hons.) Queen's University, 1990**

**Thesis  
Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts (Political Science)**

**Acadia University  
Spring Convocation, 1999**



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0-612-37791-1

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## ABSTRACT

The relationship between human rights and Canadian foreign policy has traditionally been a tenuous one. In principle, policy makers express a great deal of support for a foreign policy agenda in which human rights objectives are a key priority. In practice, human rights concerns all-too-often remain on the periphery of the foreign policy agenda, as other key priorities take precedence. Canada continues to address human rights concerns in a case-by-case fashion. Policy makers argue that such an approach is necessary in order to account for the unique circumstances surrounding human rights violations in other nations. Unfortunately, this reliance on an ad hoc approach to human rights protection and promotion has resulted in inconsistent, and often ineffective, policy responses in multilateral and bilateral contexts.

In addressing the issue of human rights, this thesis builds upon the tenets of neoliberalism in order to account for the growing interlinkages between states and the need to develop solutions based on cooperation and consensus rather than Cold War notions of power politics and the inviolability of state sovereignty. Through a critical examination of Canada's foreign relations, this thesis asserts that policy makers must incorporate the principles of consistency and coherence into the development of human rights policy. That is not to say that Canada must take a similar course of action in response to violations or threats to certain core rights, but that a threshold point, beyond which action is required, must be established in order to address such challenges.

## Acknowledgements

I first wish to offer my thanks and appreciation to my supervisor Dr. Marshall Conley. His devotion and activism in the field of human rights, both as a teacher and as a practitioner, have been a great source of inspiration to me. He has also provided me with tremendous opportunities to work in the field of human rights at the grass roots level. For his support and confidence, I am truly grateful.

I wish to also thank all of the members of the Department of Political Science who have given me so many opportunities to explore new ideas, to develop new ways of learning, and to present my ideas to your classes. I am richer for all of the opportunities that you have provided to me.

To my parents who offered me their unconditional support when I announced that I was leaving the world of work to pursue another degree, so many thanks. Your love and encouragement is a great source of strength for me. And to my brother, what can I say, I have learned just how much fun being a full-time student can really be.

To the close friends that I have met along the way (you know who you are) and with whom I have shared so much, and have had the chance to explore "the meaning of it all." I can't wait to see what our next adventures will bring. No doubt, it will leave us with much more mutual exploring to do.

And, finally to Van Morrison. Although I'm sure you'll never read this, your music was so often my accompaniment during late night editing sessions. A source of sanity, you might say.

## **Chapter One**

### **Competing Interests: Human Rights in Canadian Foreign Policy**

#### **Introduction**

Human rights issues have been a subject of Canadian foreign policy for decades. Rarely, however, have such concerns appeared at the centre of the policy process itself. While government leaders speak of human rights as a 'threshold issue'<sup>1</sup> and affirm that they will be a consideration in all of Canada's international relationships, such concerns are all too often relegated to the periphery as more pressing objectives such as trade, investment, security, political, and diplomatic relations take precedence.<sup>2</sup> An attempt by one government to address the human rights record of another, after all, is by its very nature a confrontational exercise. Any expression of such concerns in a multilateral or bilateral setting may conflict with a country's overall foreign policy goal of building stronger international political and economic ties. The degree to which human rights considerations should guide foreign policy objectives, therefore, becomes a problematic issue for policy makers.

This analysis will examine the linkage between human rights and Canadian foreign policy with emphasis on both the empirical and normative aspects of this relationship. To what extent do human rights considerations affect Canadian foreign policy? What factors are responsible for keeping human rights concerns on the periphery in the foreign policy

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<sup>1</sup> This term was used in a speech by the Hon. Lloyd Axworthy, Minister of Foreign Affairs at McGill University on October 16, 1997. This speech can be found at [http://www//dfait-maeci.gc.ca/english/news/statem-1/97\\_state/97.042e.htm](http://www//dfait-maeci.gc.ca/english/news/statem-1/97_state/97.042e.htm), accessed on 17/11/97.

<sup>2</sup> Andrew F. Cooper and Leslie A. Pal, "Human Rights and Security Policy" in *Border Crossings: The Internationalization of Canadian Public Policy*, G. Bruce Doern, Leslie A. Pal, Brian W. Tomlin, eds. (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 210.

domain? Should human rights issues be given greater priority by policy makers? I will argue that human rights considerations must be a key determinant of Canadian foreign policy. Furthermore, an effective and principled human rights strategy requires coherence and consistency; components which are all-too-frequently absent in Canada's current human rights policies.

### **Defining Human Rights - Priorities for Action**

Before embarking upon a discussion of human rights and Canadian foreign policy, it is crucial to formulate a definition of the term 'human rights'. This, in itself, is no easy task. While there is widespread acceptance of the principle of human rights, there is by no means a consensus on the nature of such rights.<sup>3</sup> The debate, for example, over whether or not human rights can even be said to be universal (which is critical in determining an acceptable definition) is both sensitive and ongoing. I will argue through the course of this analysis that human rights are indeed universal in nature, and as such can be defined as the rights one has simply by being human.<sup>4</sup> The rights I will refer to have been agreed upon through internationally recognized and legally codified standards and are outlined in Table 1.1 on page four.

In this analysis I intend to move beyond looking at human rights in the traditional

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<sup>3</sup> Burns H. Weston, "Human Rights" in *Human Rights in the World Community*, Richard P. Claude and Burns H. Weston eds. (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989), p. 15.

<sup>4</sup> A similar definition has been put forward by authors such as Jack Donnelly, Robert Matthews and Cranford Pratt.

context of first, second and third generation rights<sup>5</sup>, and instead examine this concept in a more holistic fashion. The rights listed within the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and the International Covenant on Economic and Social Rights (ICESR) are, after all, inextricably linked. Economic and social rights cannot be fully realized through the suppression of civil and political rights. Without a system of public accountability in place, which requires the acceptance of political opposition, a free media and transparent government practices, substantial economic inefficiencies become apparent. Regimes that have followed this path often find that corruption and apathy become widespread. Furthermore, reliance upon coercive government measures requires substantial economic resources that could otherwise be used to foster development.<sup>6</sup> Conversely, to argue in favour of civil and political liberties without equal attention to basic economic and social rights, such as the right to food, clothing and shelter, will not necessarily improve the lives of those who are deprived of such basic necessities. To argue in favour of one set of rights over all others fails to account for the interrelated nature of all human rights.

The reality, however, is that the Canadian Government (or any government for that matter) possesses neither the resources nor the political will necessary to intervene in all cases. Policy makers are left then with the difficult task of *prioritizing rights* in order to determine when and where human rights interventions should be made. The issue of

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<sup>5</sup> First generation rights refer to civil and political rights, second generation rights address economic and social rights and third generation rights refer to group rights.

<sup>6</sup> David Gillies, *Between Principle and Practice: Human Rights in North-South Relations* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), p. 21.



**Table 1.1 Internationally Recognized Human Rights****The International Bill of Human Rights recognizes the rights to:**

Equality of rights without discrimination (D1,D2,E2,E3,C2,C3)  
 Life (D3,C6)  
 Liberty and security of person (D3,C9)  
 Protection against slavery (D4,C8)  
 Protection against torture and cruel and inhuman punishment (D5,C7)  
 Recognition as a person before the law (D6,C16)  
 Equal protection of the law (D7,C14,C26)  
 Access to legal remedies for rights and violations (D8,C2)  
 Protection against arbitrary arrest or detention (D9,C9)  
 Hearing before an independent and impartial judiciary (D10,C14)  
 Presumption of innocence (D11,C14)  
 Protection against ex post facto laws (D11,C15)  
 Protection of privacy, family, and home (D12,C17)  
 Freedom of movement and residence (D13,C12)  
 Seek asylum from persecution (D14)  
 Nationality (D15)  
 Marry and found a family (D16,E10,C23)  
 Own property (D17)  
 Freedom of thought conscience, and religion (D18,C18)  
 Freedom of opinion, expression, and the press(D19,C19)  
 Freedom of assembly and association (D20,C21,C22)  
 Political participation (D21,C25)  
 Social Security (D22,E9)  
 Work, under favourable conditions (D23,E6,E7)  
 Free trade unions (D23,E8,C22)  
 Rest and leisure (D24,E7)  
 Food, clothing, and housing (D25,E11)  
 Health care and social services (D25,E12)  
 Special protections for children (D25,E10,C24)  
 Education (D26,E13,E14)  
 Participation in cultural life (D27,E15)  
 A social and international order needed to realize rights (D28)  
 Self-determination (E1,C1)  
 Humane treatment when detained or imprisoned (C10)  
 Protection against debtor's prison (C11)  
 Protection against arbitrary expulsion of aliens (C13)  
 Protection against advocacy of racial or religious hatred (C20)  
 Protection of minority culture (C27)

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Note: This list includes all rights that are enumerated in two of the three documents of the International Bill of Human Rights or have a full article in one document. The source of each right is indicated in parentheses, by document and article number. D=Universal Declaration of Human Rights. E=International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. C=International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. (source; Jack Donnelly, *International Human Rights*. (Boulder: Westview Press Inc., 1993) p. 9.)

*prioritizing rights* is both difficult and, from a political perspective, extremely sensitive. Evaluating the human rights performance of other countries will undoubtedly lead to charges of Western bias in the reporting system, and disagreements over the focus on certain rights and not others. The question, therefore, of which rights to give priority to is an inherently difficult one to answer.

Academics such as Henry Shue, Cranford Pratt, and Robert Matthews have focused significant attention on the concept of basic rights, or those rights that are necessary for other rights to be enjoyed. Shue argues, for example, that basic rights include the right to security of person and subsistence.<sup>7</sup> While a far greater range of rights is necessary in order to live in a satisfactory manner, "without these two, no other right can be enjoyed."<sup>8</sup> Moreover, Matthews and Pratt expand upon this list and argue that basic rights must include the right to subsistence and related needs required for sustaining life, freedom from arbitrary arrest and detention, freedom from torture, and freedom from extrajudicial execution.<sup>9</sup> Each of these authors, however, neglects to include a key fundamental right that appears throughout the UDHR and the Covenants - the right to freedom from discrimination. David Gillies, for example, argues convincingly that:

Nondiscrimination is the glue that binds disparate human rights. No state may escape this right. Canada's and Australia's treatment of aboriginal peoples is as open to scrutiny as Indonesia's treatment of the Timorese or

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<sup>7</sup> For an excellent analysis of this issue and the position of Henry Shue see Robert O. Matthews and Cranford Pratt, "Introduction: Concepts and Instruments" in *Human Rights in Canadian Foreign Policy*, Robert O. Matthews and Cranford Pratt eds. (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988), p. 6.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

Bangladesh's treatment of the Hill Tract tribes.<sup>10</sup>

Although evaluating national performances on nondiscrimination will be difficult to achieve, it is essential nonetheless. In many developing societies, discrimination has triggered ethnic conflict, political violence, systematic abuse of human rights and, in some cases, civil war.<sup>11</sup> Recent examples such as the fighting in the former Yugoslavia (and most recently Kosovo), Rwanda, and the Great Lakes region of Africa all attest to the need to address the issue of nondiscrimination in human rights policy.

For the purposes of this analysis I will utilize Gillies' argument as a starting point and assert that four principal, or core, rights deserve the priority attention of the Canadian government. These rights are the following: freedom from extrajudicial killing, freedom from torture, freedom from hunger, and freedom from discrimination.<sup>12</sup> This is not to say that other recognized rights need not be pursued. Certainly, all of the principles listed within the International Bill of Rights are worthy of further attention. Instead, the basis for identifying certain rights for priority action stems from the recognition that without a guarantee that these rights will be upheld, no other rights can be fully secured. It is, therefore, incumbent upon countries such as Canada to act when there is evidence to suggest that these core rights are being violated in a systematic fashion.

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<sup>10</sup> Gillies, p. 35.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 36.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 38.

## **Consistency and Coherence in Human Rights Policy and Practice: The Canadian Perspective**

In defining what is meant by a coherent and consistent human rights policy, it is perhaps useful to begin by explaining what this does not entail. I am not implying that a policy framework based on consistency and coherence requires uniformity in action. While taking a public stand against human rights violations may prove effective in some instances, clearly such a strategy will not work in all cases. Each case will have many variables that must be considered. Policy makers, therefore, will continue to require a great deal of flexibility in determining an appropriate course of action.

Consistency and coherence, in this case, implies that policy-makers must determine a particular threshold at which point Canada should take substantial measures in order to protect and promote human rights. Actions, of course, may vary from soft measures such as confidential representations to the government in question, public statements of concern, and support for calls for investigation in bodies such as the United Nations Commission on Human Rights to harder line measures such as the withdrawal of an ambassador, the breaking off of diplomatic relations, reductions in or complete cessation of aid, and ultimately, the use of trade sanctions.<sup>13</sup> A detailed listing of possible measures is listed in Table 1.2 on page eight. The severity of actions may vary from state to state depending upon a number of factors, not the least of which is Canada's ability to influence another government. Recognizing this, I will argue that certain guidelines must be in place, and rigorously adhered to, in order to determine when action is warranted, particularly in instances where identified

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<sup>13</sup> Evan Luard, "Human Rights and Foreign Policy" in Claude and Weston, p. 246.

## **Table 1.2 Typology of Human Rights Measures**

### ***Multilateral***

Encouraging wider participation in existing international instruments  
 Pressing for development of new instruments  
 Supporting strengthening of existing means and creating of new ones for implementation  
 Supporting or initiating calls in such bodies as the UN Commission on Human Rights for investigation of serious situations  
 Supporting or initiating sanctions (diplomatic, economic, military) in international organizations  
 Encouraging and supporting governments that promote human rights

### ***Bilateral***

#### **Diplomatic and Political**

Executing quiet diplomacy  
 Making public statements  
 Performing symbolic acts to identify with victims and those actively resisting violations  
 Cancelling or postponing official visits  
 Reducing size and/or status of diplomatic representation  
 Breaking off diplomatic relations  
 Strengthening relations with states seeking to improve conditions  
 Establishing links with opposition groups within offending states

#### **Cultural and Communications**

Reducing educational, cultural, and scientific exchanges where this would reflect adversely on the regime  
 Increasing exchanges that strengthen social forces and values threatened by the regime  
 Reducing or cancelling sporting events  
 Banning tourism (both ways)  
 Withdrawing visas  
 Restricting, suspending or cancelling communications links  
 Assisting rights-related activities such as ombudsmen, editorial commissions, and judiciary

#### **Economic**

Reducing or cancelling aid (military and economic)  
 Reducing or cancelling credit  
 Imposing limited trade and/or investment sanctions  
 Imposing comprehensive trade and/or investment sanctions  
 Taking positive measures (aid, trade conventions), conditional on improvements

#### **Military**

Banning sale of arms  
 Halting all military assistance  
 Assisting in human rights training of police and armed forces  
 Providing military assistance to opposition groups  
 Using military force

**Table 1.2 (continued)*****Transnational***

Coordinating activities - information gathering, expression of public outrage, foreign assistance, and support to liberation movements  
 Establishing codes of conduct  
 Discouraging or banning new investment

(Source: Robert O. Matthews and Cranford Pratt, "Introduction: Concepts and Instruments" in *Human Rights in Canadian Foreign Policy*, Robert O. Matthews and Cranford Pratt, eds. (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988), pp. 14-15)

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core rights are under threat or are being violated in a systematic fashion. A key to developing a more consistent human rights policy is through linking such concerns with other important foreign policy objectives, such as international development assistance and trade. In doing so, Canada can ensure that other governments are made aware that violations of human rights will affect other key elements of its bilateral or multilateral relations.

Currently, the potential for developing greater coherence and consistency as part of an overall human rights strategy is constrained by the degree to which such policies are implemented in a piecemeal and case-by-case fashion. For example, Canada has been more inclined to act on human rights concerns through its involvement in multilateral organizations such as the United Nations (UN) than through its bilateral relationships. In a bilateral context, history has shown that Canada is most willing to take a hard line human rights stand only in those cases where important economic or political ties are not deemed to be at risk. Successive governments have demonstrated a great reluctance to adopt a more consistent model for implementing human rights policies. Instead, policy makers argue that

diplomacy requires flexibility both in action and attitudes.<sup>14</sup> Thus, the current government has adopted concepts such as 'principled pragmatism' and the wielding of 'soft power' as a means of defining the relationship between human rights and the broader foreign policy framework. Rather than aiming for consistency in practice, Canada instead elects to look at each situation on a case-by-case basis in order to determine what actions, if any, should be taken. Moreover, when action is taken, the government prefers to do so discreetly hoping to bring about change through cooperative rather than confrontational measures. The rationale for this strategy stems from the government's position that Canada does not have the leverage to make a positive difference on human rights matters in all cases. Recognizing the limits of Canada's international influence, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lloyd Axworthy, has argued:

The steps we take will necessarily vary from country to country -- depending on the degree of willingness to engage with Canada on human rights questions, our leverage with that country or in the region, the number and strength of indigenous human rights NGOs (non-governmental organizations), the capacity of the country to build judicial legal and human rights infrastructure, and a range of other, complex factors.<sup>15</sup>

Certainly, the nature of international relations requires that governments must be both flexible and realistic in their policy objectives. In adopting a case-by-case approach to human rights, however, there is a real danger that strategies are being implemented without

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<sup>14</sup> Gillies, p. 223.

<sup>15</sup> Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, "Notes for an Address by the Hon. Lloyd Axworthy at McGill University 'Human Rights and Canadian Foreign Policy: Principled Pragmatism' - October 16, 1997" [http://dfait-maeci.gc.ca/english/news/statem-1/97\\_state/97\\_042e.htm](http://dfait-maeci.gc.ca/english/news/statem-1/97_state/97_042e.htm), accessed on 17/11/97.

any coherent overall sense of direction. As Stanley Hoffmann has argued:

Each decision may make sense in its own way, but the juxtaposition of contradictory decisions will undermine the human rights policy and demoralize its defenders.<sup>16</sup>

Furthermore, without a clear strategy in place, there is an increased likelihood that human rights considerations will be given only perfunctory attention in Canada's international relationships. Instead, policy makers will be more inclined to direct their attention to less sensitive issues in an effort to build closer ties with a particular state.

Government responses to public criticism over its human rights policies in recent years would seem to conform to this argument. Canadian officials have defended their policies vis-a- vis countries such as China and Indonesia, for example, by employing the following arguments: Canada is too small to act alone; by promoting trade Canada is encouraging human rights through economic growth; preserving key bilateral relations requires quiet diplomacy which, in turn, will allow future opportunities to address human rights concerns, and; Canada must respect both the principles of state sovereignty and/or a state's differing cultural values.<sup>17</sup> Admittedly, there is some truth to each these positions. Realistically, Canada does not have the economic or political power to persuade a sovereign government to change its human rights practices overnight. Furthermore, a government with a poor human rights record is more likely to listen to countries with which it has built strong political and economic relations, rather than succumb to public pressure from nations with

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<sup>16</sup> Stanley Hoffmann, *Duties Beyond Borders: On the Limits and Possibilities of Ethical International Politics* (Syracuse, Syracuse University Press, 1981), p. 117.

<sup>17</sup> Gillies, p. 259.



which it has few ties.

Instead of using enhanced economic and political affiliations with a particular country as an opportunity to address human rights concerns, however, Canadian policy makers often give such matters low priority. Canada has shown a distinct preference to focus on matters that are not deemed to be a threat to a further strengthening of economic and political relations. It would seem then that concepts such as principled pragmatism often represent little more than an acceptance of the status quo when it comes to the protection and promotion of human rights.

### **Why Focus on Human Rights**

In addressing the reasons why Canada should work to incorporate a coherent and consistent human rights strategy into its overall foreign policy, a number of themes will become apparent through the course of this analysis. First, as a signatory to the UDHR, its subsequent Covenants, and all other relevant international human rights conventions<sup>18</sup>, Canada has a duty to live up to the international commitments it has made, both at home and abroad. Quite simply, it is the morally right thing to do. It is not enough to merely agree upon common standards to which other nations may or may not comply. Canada must work through both bilateral and multilateral channels to ensure that progress is being made towards the implementation of these standards. Until recently most states (including Canada) have

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<sup>18</sup> Other conventions and treaties on specific rights include the Convention on the Prevention of the Crime of Genocide; the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; the Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women; the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees/ and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and; the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

been content to focus on standard setting while paying considerably less attention to the more difficult and politically sensitive task of implementation. Recent events, however, would suggest that this trend is now changing. The formation of the International Criminal Court and the passage of a comprehensive international land mines treaty are just two contemporary examples of an international community anxious to improve its record on implementation.

With this in mind, Canada must play a leadership role in order to find innovative ways to ensure that all nations adhere to the commitments they have made in the human rights domain.

Second, the current government has stated that a key objective of Canadian foreign policy is the projection of Canadian values and culture.<sup>19</sup> Respect for human rights is a critical component of this culture. Canada certainly cannot boast of a spotless history with respect to the protection and promotion of human rights domestically. In the present context, however, its record is nonetheless a positive one. Canada has in place effective legal and institutional mechanisms through which individuals and groups, who assert that their fundamental rights and freedoms have been violated, can turn for redress. Moreover, successive governments have attempted to enhance the quality of life of its citizenry through a vast array of health and social programs, income support initiatives, and education and training measures. That is not to say that Canada cannot do better, but, by and large, the government is living up to its domestic obligations under the International Bill of Rights. The projection of human rights through Canadian foreign policy, therefore, is nothing more than a reflection of key values in our own society, and should be considered as an important

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<sup>19</sup> Government of Canada, *Canada in the World* (Ottawa: the Government of Canada, 1995), p. 10.

element in Canada's international relations.

Third, it is in Canada's national interest to promote human rights as a means of achieving other important foreign policy objectives. Canada is, after all, a trading nation. Domestic growth and prosperity can best be achieved by ensuring that Canada can pursue its commercial interests within a stable and predictable international environment. Recent experiences have demonstrated that strong linkages do exist between human rights and economic stability. One only needs to examine the economic crisis that plagued Asian, and ultimately world, financial markets in the latter part of 1997 to understand that economic security is, at best, unstable without equal attention to the promotion of the rule of law, government accountability and transparency, the same factors that guarantee human rights.<sup>20</sup> Recent, and at times violent, calls for wide-ranging political reform in countries such as Indonesia further serve to underscore this point. For Canada, then, promoting respect for human rights should be seen as a path to ensuring longer term economic stability in key international markets.

Finally, human rights concerns will at times come into conflict with other foreign policy objectives of political, commercial and strategic importance. Inevitably compromises will have to be found. This, in turn, will make it difficult to achieve greater levels of consistency and coherence in the realm of human rights. Despite this reality, I contend that policy makers still have significant room to ensure that human rights concerns receive sufficient attention within Canada's foreign policies. After all:

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<sup>20</sup> Amnesty International, "Economic and Social Well-Being in APEC Must Include Human Rights - November 25, 1997", <http://www.amnesty.org/news/1997/13001097.htm>, accessed on 04/10/98.

To argue that states face conflicting interests and thus may have to restrain pursuit of human rights is one thing. It is quite another, however, to assert that because of these other pressing goals states cannot normally consider human rights in bilateral relations.<sup>21</sup>

Government officials, by striving to achieve greater consistency and coherence in the development of a comprehensive human rights strategy, can ensure that human rights considerations will become truly entrenched within the broader foreign policy framework.

### **A Discussion of the Analytic Framework**

In developing this argument, a number of methodological tools will be employed. First, this thesis will rely extensively upon the examination of both the documentational and theoretical human rights literature. As well, a great deal of attention will be paid to analyzing contemporary government speeches and documents which specifically address human rights in Canadian foreign policy. This analysis will also critically evaluate a number of contemporary Canadian human rights initiatives and foreign policy issues, both in a multilateral and bilateral context.

It should be noted that a study such as this is not without certain limitations. First, it is beyond the scope of this analysis to provide a comprehensive examination of the domestic policy environment in which decisions are made. Yet, the current minister of foreign affairs has expressed a commitment to make the foreign policy process more open and inclusive, both to non-governmental organizations and the Canadian public. Annual consultations on issues such as human rights and peacebuilding are now the norm within the

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<sup>21</sup> Matthews and Pratt, p. 298.

Department of Foreign Affairs. What is not clear, however, is the degree to which these initiatives affect the development of policy positions.

In addition, the media often play a critical role in shaping public opinion and in framing the issues that are placed at the top of the public's agenda. Television images of desperation and suffering in the Great Lakes region of Africa or mass killings in the former Yugoslavia assist in mobilizing public opinion and in generating support for government action in defence of human rights. A detailed analysis of these factors and how they influence Canadian human rights policies would, therefore, be both interesting and desirable.

Secondly, in attempting to present a broad analysis of Canadian foreign policy and human rights, there is always a danger of generalizing cases that warrant specific and more detailed analysis. There are many excellent examples of case studies in the contemporary literature that lends credence to the value of utilizing this method as a means of studying the relationship between human rights and Canadian foreign policy.<sup>22</sup> Yet, there is also much to be gained from examining this issue from a broader perspective. In arguing for greater consistency and coherence in Canada's human rights strategies, I contend that such considerations must factor into all aspects of Canadian foreign policy. Rather than limiting the focus of my study to one or two carefully chosen cases, I believe it is important to examine this topic through a wider conceptual lens. This analysis will focus on providing an accurate (if at times somewhat general) account of the relationship between human rights

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<sup>22</sup> See for example, Paul Gecelovsky and T.A. Keenleyside, "Canada's International Human Rights Policy in Practice: Tiananmen Square" *International Journal* 50(3) 1995, pp. 564-593, or Ricardo Grinspun, Nivaldo Galleguillos and Richard Roman, "Economic Reforms and Political Democratization in Mexico: Reevaluating Basic Tenets of Canadian Foreign Policy." in *Democracy and Foreign Policy: Canada Among Nations 1995*. Maxwell Cameron and Maureen Appel Molot eds. (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1995), pp. 211-234.

and foreign policy across a wide range of issues.

Chapter two of this analysis focuses on the establishment of a clear theoretical foundation from which to proceed. The coming to an end of the Cold War, the growing interdependency between states, and the rising importance of non-state actors in international relations, all have reinforced the need for a theoretical approach that seeks to find ways to promote international cooperation across the entire spectrum of issues. I contend that neoliberalism is the most satisfactory perspective from which to proceed. In arguing in favour of a neoliberal approach I will also critically examine the other main tenets of human rights theory: realism, statism and relativism, all of which continue to be employed in the study of international relations and human rights.

Chapters three and four will include both an empirical and normative analysis of the relationship between Canadian foreign policy and human rights. Chapter three will focus on Canada's efforts to promote human rights issues within multilateral organizations, principally the UN. Since the passage of the UDHR in 1948, this body has proven to be the most important avenue for the setting of normative international standards.<sup>23</sup> Currently, the UN is grappling with the question of how to move from standard setting to the more difficult task of implementing human rights objectives. This chapter will examine the role Canada is playing in order to enhance the UN's ability to protect and promote human rights. Specifically, I will focus on the relatively new concept of human security as an area in which Canada can and should take a leadership role.

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<sup>23</sup> J.D. Livermore, "The Universal Declaration and Beyond: Human Rights and International Action in the 1990s" in *Human Rights, Development and Foreign Policy: Canadian Perspectives*, Irving Brecher ed. (Canada: The Institute for Research on Public Policy, 1989), p. 149.

Ultimately, the success of the UN will depend upon the willingness of member states to recognize and abide by international human rights standards. It is, therefore, in the realm of bilateral relations that many of the objectives identified in the International Bill of Rights can best be achieved. Chapter four will address human rights in a bilateral context. Here the focus will be on the two main pillars of Canada's bilateral relations, international development assistance and trade. Drawing upon a number of contemporary examples, I will analyze Canada's human rights policies, as well as offer a number of practical recommendations.

Chapter five will address the question of how can policy makers ensure greater consistency and coherence in the development of Canadian human rights policies. There is little doubt that such an objective will be difficult to achieve. I will argue that if the Canadian government is to play an effective role in making human rights a 'threshold issue' then efforts must also be made to establish a common threshold which will determine what, if any, actions should be taken, particularly in the protection and promotion of certain core rights.

## **Conclusion**

The Canadian government continues to address human rights matters in a selective and piecemeal fashion, allowing other key policy objectives to push such concerns to the bottom of the foreign policy agenda. In order for human rights issues to gain an equal footing, policy makers must exhibit a greater commitment to the development of consistent and coherent human rights strategies. Anything less will result in the continued reliance on

ad hoc, reactive and, ultimately, inconsistent policy responses to address key rights issues, a solution which is neither effective nor desirable in the protection and promotion of human rights.



## Chapter Two

### Neoliberalism Revisited: Developing a Theoretical Approach in the Post-Cold War Era

#### Introduction

A defining feature of the post-Cold War period has been the increasing interdependency between nations. While this is particularly noticeable in the realm of international trade and commerce, this trend is evident across a broad range of public policy fields.<sup>1</sup> Issues such as the spread of HIV/Aids, global warming, terrorism, and large-scale human poverty and suffering have important international ramifications. Solutions to such transnational challenges require the cooperation and collective action of governments, the private sector and NGOs alike. Moreover, borders are becoming more permeable to the sharing of ideas and information, not just between governments, but also at the sub-national level. This has allowed for the development of enhanced linkages and new cooperative opportunities at all levels of society.

In order to account for this growing interdependency between states, three distinct trends must be examined: globalization, internationalization, and the unprecedented growth in the availability and use of information technology. According to Leslie Pal, these trends have "...accelerated and deepened the tendency towards international connections."<sup>2</sup> Consequently, a theoretical approach to the study of human rights and foreign policy must

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<sup>1</sup> University of Ottawa Human Rights Research and Education Centre, "Gordon Henderson Distinguished Lecture The Honourable Lloyd Axworthy, Minister of Foreign Affairs - November 6, 1997", <http://www.uottawa.ca/~hrrec/conf/axwore.html>, accessed on 25/02/98.

<sup>2</sup> Leslie A. Pal, *Beyond Policy Analysis: Public Issue Management in Turbulent Times* (Scarborough: International Thomson Publishing, 1997), p. 35.

adequately address the complex and interdependent nature of inter-state relations. This chapter will examine four key theoretical approaches to international relations; relativism, realism, statism, and neoliberalism, and their current relevance to the study of human rights. Although each school of thought continues to retain significant support among scholars, it will be argued that the neoliberal position is the most useful theoretical approach in terms of addressing the relationship between human rights and foreign policy decision-making in the modern era.

### **Defining Trends in the post-Cold War Period**

#### **Globalization:**

Globalization refers to the deepening of economic and political interdependencies among states. Its importance lies in the fact that it is challenging key assumptions about sovereignty and the role of the nation state.<sup>3</sup> National economies are becoming more closely intertwined. Banks, corporations and investors can now transfer millions of dollars across international borders at the touch of a button. Globalization, in short, has opened up borders to transfers of capital, information and goods and services at an extraordinary rate.

Although this phenomenon is commonly studied from an economic perspective, it has important ramifications for other policy fields, and in particular human rights. After all:

With globalization, people, ideas and information are now moving across borders at unprecedented rates, and state sovereignty has become a much more diffuse concept. Many states have shown a new willingness to

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<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 33-35.

allow international scrutiny of their human rights records.<sup>4</sup>

Globalization is also significant for another reason. Political and social instability, as a result of systematic violations of human rights, in one country is likely to have a direct impact upon other nations. Uncertainty or upheaval will clearly affect trade flows and economic opportunities. For a nation such as Canada, in which international trade accounts for forty per cent of the national gross domestic product and approximately one of every three jobs, such uncertainty can have an immediate and negative economic effect.<sup>5</sup> As interlinkages between states continue to grow this reality will become even more pronounced.

### **Internationalization:**

Internationalization, while linked to globalization in a technological and economic sense, refers to the increasing number of non-domestic factors which may influence the policy making process. The internationalization of human rights (i.e. the universal acceptance of international norms such as the UDHR), is in many respects, the cultural dimension of globalization.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore:

The more that human rights are internationalized,  
the greater the impact of external standards on

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<sup>4</sup> University of Ottawa Human Rights and Research Centre, "Gordon Henderson Distinguished Lecture: The Honourable Lloyd Axworthy, Minister of Foreign Affairs"

<sup>5</sup> Lloyd Axworthy, "Canada and Human Security: The Need for Leadership", <http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/english/foreignp/sechurne.htm>, accessed on 19/01/98.

<sup>6</sup> Andrew F. Cooper and Leslie A. Pal, "Human Rights and Security Policy" in *Border Crossings: The Internationalization of Canadian Public Policy*, G. Bruce Doern, Leslie A. Pal, Brian W. Tomlin, eds. (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 209.

domestic policy and the less sovereignty, in the classical sense, is exercised by domestic governments.<sup>7</sup>

Internationalization is not a new phenomenon. Through the UN, nations have for many years negotiated, signed and ratified a wide range of human rights covenants and conventions. Moreover, the widespread international acceptance of human rights instruments attests to the growing internationalization of human rights issues. The UN routinely assigns special rapporteurs to investigate specific human rights issues or alleged violations in certain countries. Similarly, states regularly submit national status reports on issues such as human rights to UN bodies for further scrutiny by member states.

This trend has grown in significance, in recent years, as the UN and many of its member states (including Canada) push to find new ways to implement international agreements and explore innovative methods to protect against human rights violations. The creation of the International Criminal Court in 1998, for example, is an important tool in order to enforce existing international laws, promote a greater respect for human rights and foster new opportunities for peace. Its importance also lies in the fact that the vast majority of nations (the United States being one notable exception) exhibited a willingness to set aside interests based largely within the confines of national sovereignty and invest their confidence in a new international body. It is a sign that states recognize, perhaps more than ever before, that respect for human rights and international law, is in the best interests of all nations.

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<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 210.

### **The Proliferation of Information Technology:**

The rapid proliferation in the availability and use of new information and communications technologies has accelerated the growth of both globalization and internationalization, and offers new opportunities in the realm of human rights. Recognizing the important role technology can play in promoting human rights and good governance, the Canadian government, in 1996, announced the development of a Canadian International Information Strategy (CIIS).<sup>8</sup> In explaining how this strategy will be used in the field of human rights, Minister Axworthy asserted:

...the CIIS will look at ways to use powerful new information technologies to provide rapid information exchange which could be used to strengthen such activities as addressing human rights abuses or international crime, areas where the rapid exchange of information across borders is essential. The strategy could also play a key role in helping to establish free media and counter hate propaganda, and so bolster democracy and reduce the likelihood of conflict in troubled regions.<sup>9</sup>

The implications for this technology, however, extend far beyond government. There are also important ramifications with respect to how technology is changing the role that non-state actors can play in the policy process. Historically, governments have held a comparative advantage over the general public with respect to access to information. Officials from the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) have commonly used this argument when

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<sup>8</sup> Lloyd Axworthy, "Canada and Human Security: The Need for Leadership"

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

rationalizing the traditional closed-door nature of foreign policy decision-making.<sup>10</sup> The growth in technology (such as the Internet), however, has in some respects eliminated this advantage. Through the Internet, NGOs and the general public can access a tremendous amount of information almost instantaneously.<sup>11</sup>

The use of available technology also has important implications for cooperation between NGOs. Andrew Cooper and Leslie Pal, for example, have compared the Canadian NGO community to Swift's Lilliput, "...consisting of hundreds of tiny organizations that swarm over the Gulliver of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade restraining it here and there but still dominated by the giant."<sup>12</sup> Now these same organizations, through enhanced communications and information sharing, can more effectively coordinate strategies and, hence, utilize their resources in a more productive fashion. While one must be careful not to overstate the role of NGOs, or to conclude that through the use of technology non-state actors have automatically enhanced their influence, this trend may lead to a substantial shift in the role of NGOs play in the development and implementation of human rights policy.

### **The Theoretical Dilemma**

Globalization, internationalization, and the proliferation of new technologies pose

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<sup>10</sup> For a closer examination of the traditional closed-door nature of foreign policy making please see Denis Stairs, "Public Opinion and External Affairs: Reflections on the Domestication of Canadian Foreign Policy" *International Journal* 33, no. 1, (1978), p. 141.

<sup>11</sup> Pal, p. 45.

<sup>12</sup> Cooper and Pal, p. 222.

important theoretical dilemmas for scholars and governments alike. Approaches that focus entirely upon the nation-state as the only important actor in international affairs may risk oversimplifying the growing complexity of interstate relations. Moreover, theories that focus on state sovereignty in its traditional context, without accounting for the growth in international issues that transcend state borders, risk providing a less than accurate portrayal of challenges facing the international. Finally, approaches that argue against the universality of human rights may be underestimating the effect of growing interdependencies among states on the development of a universal rights dialogue.

The nature of international relations, and consequently the study of human rights, is changing rapidly. As linkages among states continue to strengthen it is clear that the actions of one country will have significant consequences for other nations. It is, therefore, incumbent upon policy makers to adopt a theoretical approach that stresses cooperation and consensus among international actors. It is to this issue that I will now turn.

### **The Relativist Perspective:**

Relativist theory challenges the presumption that human rights are universal in nature. Instead, proponents of this model argue that human rights do not exist independent of culture, ideology and value systems.<sup>13</sup> In recent years, this doctrine has garnered substantial attention. Specifically, a number of Asian governments, including; Indonesia, Malaysia, China, Singapore, and Burma, have argued strenuously against the principle of

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<sup>13</sup> R.J. Vincent, *Human Rights and International Relations* (Great Britain: University Press, Cambridge, 1986), p. 38.

universal human rights. Instead, leaders in these countries have promoted an Asian concept of human rights in which freedom is sacrificed for social order and enhanced economic growth. As Chinese President, Jiang Zemin, has argued, "it is impossible to impose a uniform model on all countries."<sup>14</sup> If this is, in fact, the case, then any attempts to arrive at a universally acceptable definition of human rights is futile. Moreover, from this position, any efforts by countries such as Canada to raise human rights issues with other nations can be discounted merely as a form of cultural imperialism.

Much of the debate surrounding this issue has centred on the nature of the UDHR and the subsequent Covenants on Civil and Political, as well as Economic, Social, and Cultural rights. Proponents of universal rights view this declaration as the "central document for the cause of human rights."<sup>15</sup> Supporters argue that the UDHR, through its careful consideration of civil, political, economic, cultural and social rights, has proven to be a flexible and viable tool in addressing human rights issues facing all countries and all cultures.<sup>16</sup> In other words, the rights identified within the UDHR represent a proper definition of human rights because they are shared by all people simply because of their common humanity.

Conversely, critics of this position assert that it is impossible to speak of universal rights and norms. Instead, it is argued:

there is no universal morality because the history

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<sup>14</sup> Rod Mickleburgh, "Tiananmen Crackdown Necessary to Avoid Chaos, Jiang Says." *Globe and Mail*, 01 December, 1997, A1.

<sup>15</sup> Alison Dundes Renteln, *International Human Rights: Universalism Versus Relativism* (United States of America: Sage Publications Inc., 1990), p. 30.

<sup>16</sup> M.W. Conley, "Human Rights and the United Nations: The Creation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights", <http://plato.acadiau.ca/COURSES/POLS/conley/pols4883/udhr.htm>, accessed on 20/03/1998.



of the world is the story of the plurality of cultures,  
and the attempt to assert universality...as a criterion  
of all morality is a more or less well-disguised version  
of the imperial routine of trying to make the values of a  
particular culture general.<sup>17</sup>

With respect to the UDHR, critics believe that it was written with a predominantly Western bias and, therefore, espouses Western values. This argument centres on a number of key points. First, relativists refer to the disproportionate degree of Western representation on the original drafting committee. Alluding, for instance, to the lack of African representation (because decolonization did not even begin to take place until the early 1950s), these detractors argue that "the membership of the UN was most assuredly a critical factor in shaping the UDHR".<sup>18</sup> Secondly, scholars and governments alike have pointed to the American flavour of this document. Often referred to as the International Bill of Rights, many of the notions represented in the UDHR and its Covenants resemble American and Western political ideals.<sup>19</sup>

In responding to these criticisms, a number of factors are worthy of consideration. First, with respect to the make-up of the drafting committee itself, one only needs to examine the names and nationalities of its members to conclude that this is not a document based entirely in western political thought. Names such as Chang (China), Malik (Lebanon), Loufti (Egypt), Mehta (India), Romulo (the Phillippines), Bogomolov (Soviet Union), and

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<sup>17</sup> Vincent, p. 37.

<sup>18</sup> Renteln, p. 30.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.

Ribuikar (Yugoslavia), all attest to the truly universal nature of the Declaration.<sup>20</sup> The acceptance by all countries of the 1993 Vienna World Conference declaration reaffirming the universal nature of such rights serves to further confirm the importance of the UDHR.

In responding to those who argue that universal human rights do not exist, it is also useful to examine social and political trends in newly emerging democracies. Despite the arguments by some governments that civil and political rights have little place in their own societies, citizens are finding that such internationally recognized rights are essential to protecting themselves against more repressive economic and political elites.<sup>21</sup> Jack Donnelly, for example, has noted that many people living in developing nations:

When given the chance...have in effect declared that the sacrifices they made in the name of development, self-determination, or national security were most often imposed on them by force, and that their resistance was repressed through systematic violations of civil and political rights.<sup>22</sup>

In other words, those governments opposed to the principle of universal rights are, in effect, attempting to rationalize their own unwillingness to grant fundamental rights and freedoms to their own people. Certainly, all governments must be aware of significant cultural differences, and show caution and sensitivity when dealing with clashing values. In instances, however, where the actions of a state lead to the eradication of fundamental rights

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<sup>20</sup> Conley

<sup>21</sup> Jack Donnelly, *International Human Rights: Dilemmas in World Politics* (Boulder: Westview Press, Inc., 1993), pp. 32-35.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35.

and freedoms for its citizens, sensitivity to cultural differences should not mean inaction.<sup>23</sup>

All too often brutal and repressive regimes have used cultural distinctiveness as a justification for their own abusive policies. Clearly, violations of core rights such as torture, extrajudicial killing, starvation and systematic discrimination should be as unacceptable in countries such as China and Nigeria as they are in Canada.

### **The Realist Perspective:**

Since the end of the World War Two, the realist school of thought has been supported by many political leaders and policy makers worldwide. Realist theory focuses on the role of the state as the dominant actor in international affairs and views the principle of state sovereignty as paramount.<sup>24</sup> Leading realist scholars such as Hans Morgenthau and Kenneth Waltz view the world as being essentially anarchic in nature and argue that states are guided solely by considerations of national self-interest and the pursuit of power.<sup>25</sup> This viewpoint proved to be an effective approach to understanding Cold War politics, as both major superpowers attempted to project their own power and influence as widely as possible in the global arena.

The coming to an end of the Cold War and the subsequent rise of a new multipolar

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<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 38.

<sup>24</sup> Charles Kegley Jr. and Eugene R. Wittkopf, eds., *World Politics: Trends and Transformations*, 6th ed. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), p. 22.

<sup>25</sup> Robert W. Tucker, "Professor Morgenthau's Theory of Political Realism", *The Bobbs-Merrill Reprint Series in the Social Sciences* reprinted from *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. XLVI (1952), pp. 214-224. Also for an interesting critique of the realist position see Jack Donnelly, *International Human Rights: Dilemmas in World Politics*, pp. 32-34.

world order has not led to the demise of the realist school of thought. The new neorealist perspective continues to highlight the anarchical nature of international affairs and the continued absence of effective central unifying institutions. Neorealists continue to see the state as the primary actor in international affairs. The actions of policy makers, therefore, are aimed at seeking to ensure their own survival in the international system. Power is not seen as an end in itself, but as a means to ensure survival.<sup>26</sup>

The question remains, however, where do human rights fit into this theoretical approach? The simple answer is that they receive little attention. Human rights considerations - which are seen as a predominantly moral in nature - are deemed to come into conflict with other more pressing national interests and, therefore, are not in the best interest of the state. Morgenthau, for example, has argued that the:

principle of the defence of human rights cannot be consistently applied in foreign policy because it can and must come in conflict with other interests that may be more important than the defence of human rights in a particular circumstance.<sup>27</sup>

Similarly, Henry Kissinger, in discussing the difficulty of addressing human rights concerns in American foreign policy has stated: "Making human rights a vocal objective of our foreign policy involves great dangers: You run the risk of either showing your impotence or producing revolutions in friendly countries - or both."<sup>28</sup> Moral considerations, it seems, have little place in a theoretical approach that focuses on the projection of power and the survival

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<sup>26</sup> Charles Kegley Jr. and Eugene Wittkopf, eds., p. 29.

<sup>27</sup> As quoted in Jack Donnelly, *Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), p. 232.

of the state.

From a Canadian foreign policy perspective, realists can point to a number of examples, both past and present, as a means of demonstrating the relevance of this theoretical approach. In the 1995 Foreign Policy white paper, *Canada in the World*, for example, the government outlined three key foreign policy principles:

- The promotion of prosperity and employment;
- The protection of our security, within a stable global framework; and
- The projection of Canadian values and culture.<sup>29</sup>

Realists can argue that the first two goals and, to a lesser extent, the third, are consistent with the argument that pursuit of national interests and enhanced power and stability are the key objectives of Canadian foreign policy. Moreover, high profile trade missions to Asia, Central and South America in recent years are clear examples of Canada's efforts to enhance its economic power and political status.

With respect to human rights and Canadian foreign policy, realists can again point to a number of relevant examples as a means of backing up their assertions. For instance, in 1995, former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Andre Ouellet, in explaining Canada's decisions to pursue enhanced economic ties with countries such as China, argued "...to try to be a Boy Scout on your own, when indeed, nobody else is following is absolutely counterproductive"<sup>30</sup> This statement made it clear that enhanced trade opportunities and the pursuit of economic

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<sup>28</sup> Mel Gurtov, *Global Politics in the Human Interest* (Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1991), pp. 19-20.

<sup>29</sup> Government of Canada, *Canada in the World*, p. 10.

<sup>30</sup> "Canada is No Longer World Boy Scout: Ouellet" *Montreal Gazette*, 16 May, 1995, A1.

growth were more important priorities than the promotion and protection of human rights.

As these examples demonstrate, the realist perspective can at times be applied to the study of Canadian foreign policy. It would be overstating it, though, to argue that it is the best theoretical model from which to build. As the global community becomes more closely interlinked the old views of state sovereignty and nations acting solely on the basis of self-interest do not tell the entire story. Many nations are now expressing support for improved rules based systems of international trade, global environmental standards and new avenues to implement international laws and human rights agreements. Power relationships, in other words, are being replaced by a growing understanding of the need for cooperative action. Policy makers who are anxious to protect the interests of their own state are now relying more upon compromise and consensus-building as a means of ensuring a stable world order.

It is in the realm of human rights where the greatest challenges to realist thought are now evident. Arguments against the inclusion of human rights in foreign policy for reasons of national self-interest fail to account for the fact that, at times, any foreign policy objective may conflict with other key goals of the state. Jack Donnelly has argued:

We do not... hear realists railing against pursuing economic interests, or friendly diplomatic relations, or cultural contacts, or the principle of *pacta sunt servanda*, because they will inevitably conflict with other interests that in some circumstances must take priority. And we should not accept such arguments with respect to human rights.<sup>31</sup>

Without question, national security, independence and prosperity are strong components of political life and, hence, a nation's foreign policy. A government does not have to limit itself

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<sup>31</sup> Jack Donnelly, *Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice*, p. 232.

to the pursuit of these objectives. Although national interests will continue to be an important component of foreign policy, it does not have to be a government's sole obligation.<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, recent trends have had the effect of linking human rights issues more closely with matters of national security and economic prosperity. Moral considerations such as human rights are now seen to have a direct bearing on national interests and, thus, cannot be ignored in the development of an effective foreign policy.

### **The Statist Perspective:**

Similar to the realist perspective, statist logic argues that the state is the primary actor in the international system, and recognizes the principle of state sovereignty as being the core of all international law.<sup>33</sup> While realists argue that it is unwise to pursue human rights in foreign policy, the statist position dictates that what a state does with respect to its own nationals on its own territory is not a matter of international concern.<sup>34</sup> Statists, therefore, argue that human rights considerations fall within the domestic domain of a particular nation and need not be given a high degree of consideration in the realm of foreign policy.

The principle of state sovereignty has been a key foundation on which the international system has been built. Article 2(7) of the United Nations Charter reinforces this principle. This article states:

Nothing contained in the present Charter shall authorize the United

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<sup>32</sup> Jack Donnelly, *International Human Rights: Dilemmas in World Politics*, p. 34.

<sup>33</sup> Jack Donnelly, *Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice*, p. 232.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 232.

Nations to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state or shall require the Members to submit such matters to settlement under the present Charter; but this principle shall not prejudice the application of enforcement measures under Chapter VII.<sup>35</sup>

State sovereignty, in other words, is the guiding principle of international relations, and as such, states should have little say in the domestic affairs of other nations. R.J. Vincent, for example, has argued in support of the principle of nonintervention even "in the face of outrageous conduct within the state."<sup>36</sup> Vincent contends:

...there are, on balance, insufficient grounds for trust in the impartiality of the intervenor and that there are reasons to suppose that the consequences of intervention will extend beyond the correction of the perceived evil.<sup>37</sup>

Throughout recent history, statist logic has also influenced Canadian foreign policy, particularly in the field of human rights. According to former senior diplomat, John Holmes:

The charter forbade interference in matters of domestic jurisdiction, and there was a strong argument for maintaining that principle. It provided a framework for the weak and, if not preserved, the UN could be swamped in irreconcilable conflict.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> A. Leroy Bennett, *International Organizations: Principles and Issues*, 6th ed. (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc.), 995), p. 468.

<sup>36</sup> As quoted in Richard Falk, "Theoretical Foundations of Human Rights" in *Human Rights in the World Community*, Richard P. Claude and Burns H. Weston, eds. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989), p. 31.

<sup>37</sup> As quoted in Falk, p. 31.

<sup>38</sup> As quoted in Kim Richard Nossal, "Cabin'd, Cribb'd, Confin'd?: Canada's Interest in Human Rights" in *Human Rights in Canadian Foreign Policy*, Robert O. Matthews and Cranford Pratt, eds. (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988), p. 50.



In the years immediately following World War II, the Canadian government, felt that attempts to draw attention to another state's human rights record would be seen as an infringement upon the domestic affairs of that state.<sup>39</sup> Although officials were willing to express criticisms over another government's human rights policies in multilateral forums such as the UN Human Rights Commission, Canada was reluctant to address these matters in its own bilateral relations.

This adherence to the principle of state sovereignty continued to dominate Canadian foreign policy throughout the 1950s and 1960s. Even as late as the 1970s, the Canadian government remained unwilling to address human rights issues in its bilateral relations, except in those instances where the government had few economic or political ties.<sup>40</sup> During a 1973 visit to China, for example, Prime Minister Trudeau praised the country's leaders for their attempts to "instil equality and greater social justice."<sup>41</sup> Moreover, in 1977, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Don Jamieson, argued "there are no firm and fixed rules for raising and discussing what are essentially the domestic concerns of other states."<sup>42</sup> Statism, and the notion of noninterference have, at times, figured prominently in Canadian foreign policy.

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<sup>39</sup> Cranford Pratt, "The Limited Place of Human Rights in Canadian Foreign Policy" in *Human Rights, Development and Foreign Policy: Canadian Perspectives*, Irving Brecher ed. (Canada: The Institute for Research on Public Policy, 1989), p. 171.

<sup>40</sup> See for example T.A. Keenleyside, "Canadian Aid and Human Rights: Forging a Link" in *Human Rights, Development and Foreign Policy: Canadian Perspectives*. In this article the author makes the point that Canada has curtailed aid only in those countries where it has few strategic and commercial interests. Examples include; Uganda, Equatorial Guinea, El Salvador and Guatemala.

<sup>41</sup> Paul Gecelovsky and T.A. Keenleyside, "Canada's International Human Rights Policy in Practice: Tiananmen Square," *International Journal* 50(3), (1995), pp. 564-565.

Yet, there is an inherent contradiction within this statist logic. Proponents argue that human rights considerations should not figure prominently in foreign policy decisions because it involves interference in the domestic affairs of another state. It can just as readily be argued, however, that all foreign policy objectives involve efforts to influence the policies of other nations.<sup>43</sup> For instance, recent Canadian trade missions represent direct attempts to influence economic decisions within a particular country. Just as Canada attempts to exert greater leverage in these areas so should it apply its influence on human rights issues. Statism, therefore, provides no reasonable grounds for the exclusion of human rights from foreign policy.

### **Revisiting Neoliberalism:**

Since the end of the Cold War, there has been a rise in neoliberal thought as a means of addressing many of the emerging challenges in the field of international relations. Neoliberalism is derived from the basic tenets of classical liberalism and is rooted in the principles espoused by early liberal thinkers, including Immanuel Kant, Thomas Jefferson, John Stuart Mill, John Locke, Jean Jacques Rousseau and David Hume.<sup>44</sup> Unlike the realist school of thought, liberals emphasize ethical principle over the pursuit of power. Classical arguments include: human nature is essentially good and people are capable of mutual aid and cooperation; fundamental concerns for others' welfare makes progress possible; war is

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<sup>42</sup> Nossal, p. 51.

<sup>43</sup> Jack Donnelly, *Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice*, p. 233.

<sup>44</sup> See Charles Kegley Jr. and Eugene R. Wittkopf, eds., p. 30.

not inevitable; and when it does occur it is a matter of international concern requiring collective or multilateral action.<sup>45</sup> International institutions such as the League of Nations, and later the United Nations, were created largely out of the belief that states could come together in search of common solutions to international problems. Moreover, the growth in international and regional human rights institutions suggests that liberal ideals have retained a certain relevancy over the years.

The resurgence of neoliberalism stems from the growing sense that realist thought, and its emphasis on power politics, fails to address the complexity of modern day interstate relations.<sup>46</sup> Although neoliberals might not dispute the realist assertion that the international system is anarchic in nature, the neoliberal position focuses on cooperation rather than conflict in the international system. As Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lloyd Axworthy has stated:

Now that the world has dispensed with the East-West rivalry that monopolized its attention and sapped its energy, we should - in theory at least - be able to promote a fairer, more humane vision of international affairs.<sup>47</sup>

In the context of human rights, the growing international focus on the implementation of previously agreed upon standards underscores the need to establish a theoretical approach based on cooperation and consensus building, and which views multilateral organizations and regimes in a positive light.

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<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.

<sup>47</sup> Lloyd Axworthy, "Between Globalization and Multipolarity: The Case for a Global, Humane Canadian Foreign

Recent Canadian initiatives in the realm of human rights suggest a distinct resurgence in neoliberal thought within government. At present, a key component of Canada's human rights initiatives, and indeed its foreign policy generally, is the principle of soft power. This concept is based on the use of persuasion rather than coercion, and diplomacy and coalition building rather than confrontation.<sup>48</sup> It is, in effect, the evolution of Canada's status as a middle power. Canada's ardent support of international organizations and regimes, as the most effective venues to promote international cooperation, further reflects this commitment to neoliberal ideology. In short, while Canada does pursue policy objectives on the basis of national interests, policy makers also recognize that such interests are inextricably linked to the actions of other states within the international system.

Finally, it is important to note that while neoliberalism recognizes that states are still the dominant actors in international affairs, they are by no means the only actors. The rise of transnational entities such as international banks, multinational corporations and international NGOs must be accounted for "...because they act as transmission belts, making government policies in various countries more sensitive to one another."<sup>49</sup> In the field of human rights and international development there has been a growing trend towards cooperation between NGOs and the Canadian government in the delivery of programs. Former Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) President Margaret Catley Carlson has stated:

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Policy," <http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/english/foreignp/humane.htm>, accessed on 19/01/98.

<sup>48</sup> See Lloyd Axworthy, "Canada and Human Security: The Need for Leadership"

<sup>49</sup> Charles Kegley Jr. and Eugene R. Wittkopf, eds., p. 31.

NGOs, in my judgement, have some practical, as well as visionary, virtues. They are human, personal and unbureaucratic;...they can work effectively in fields and places where government cannot operate.<sup>50</sup>

Certainly, this trend towards public-private partnerships in the field of human rights is not just a Canadian phenomenon. There is a growing recognition that not only do non-state actors have access to valuable human rights information, but they also have the expertise necessary to assist in the implementation and delivery of human rights policies and programs. Cooperation and partnership with non-state actors, then, is a critical and growing component of international relations and cannot be ignored.

### **Conclusion**

The nature of international relations in the post-Cold War era is transforming rapidly. Globalization, internationalization and the proliferation of new information technologies are having the effect of linking the interests of states on a wide range of issues. Solutions to international problems will require far greater levels of consensus and collective action than ever before. Furthermore, while the state continues to be a dominant actor in the international arena, non-state actors are also playing a more prominent role. From a human rights perspective, then, these trends are allowing for greater opportunities to work towards a true universal rights discourse. Clearly, this has led to a rethinking of some of the dominant theoretical perspectives regarding human rights and foreign policy. Specifically, neoliberalism and its focus on addressing the complexity and interconnectedness of the international system is the most valuable theory from which to build.

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<sup>50</sup> Tim Colby, "Interest Groups: NGOs for International Development" in *Influences on Federal Policy-Making: Recent Case Studies*, Donald C. Rowat, ed. (Ottawa: Carleton University, 1992), p. 133.

### **Chapter Three**

## **Canada and the United Nations: Promoting and Protecting Human Rights in the Multilateral Arena**

### **Introduction**

A key component of Canadian foreign policy has been its support for wide-ranging multilateral institutions. Not only is Canada a founding member of the United Nations, but it plays a leading role in organizations such as the Commonwealth, La Francophonie and the Organization of American States. It is within the UN, however, where Canada has focussed much of its efforts in the realm of foreign policy and human rights. The UN has offered Canada a venue for active involvement in world affairs, and in return Canadian participation has arguably made the organization better than it otherwise would have been.

In recent years the changing face of international relations has led to many questions regarding the UN's ability to manage threats to peace and security, and to protect and promote human rights. As a greater number of issues find their way onto the global agenda, the definition of what constitutes a security threat has expanded greatly, and now includes issues such as economic stagnation, poverty, over population, human rights violations and environmental degradation.<sup>1</sup> In addition, the post-Cold War era has been characterized by a flourishing of new kinds of wars - conflicts that are fought within, rather than between, states. The roots of these conflicts can often be found in longstanding nationalistic, ethnic and religious tensions. They are notable for their violent nature and for the frequency in

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<sup>1</sup> Government of Canada, *Towards a Rapid Reaction Capability for the United Nations* (Canada: Government of Canada, 1995), p. 4.

which civilians are targeted and forced to endure tremendous suffering.<sup>2</sup> Traditional peacekeeping measures, which focus upon bringing an end to the conflict without necessarily addressing its root causes, are not enough to secure peace and ensure a commitment to human rights protection.

In order to address this issue Canada has, in recent years, promoted the concept of human security. This term focuses on the security and well-being of the individual as a key determinant of international peace and stability.<sup>3</sup> Canada's interest in redefining security threats along these lines should be applauded and encouraged. If successful, these efforts will improve the potential for the UN to protect and promote human rights more effectively, particularly in conflict-ridden societies. Success, however, will depend upon the degree to which such policies are implemented in a coherent and consistent fashion. Current ad hoc UN responses to crises that have been characterized by gross and systematic violations of human rights have all-too-often proven to be ineffective in terms of protecting the innocent.

In addressing the role that Canada should play in the promotion of an innovative human security agenda, the objective of this analysis is four-fold. First, a brief historical overview of Canada's support for, and involvement in, the United Nations will be provided. This section will highlight Canada's active participation at the UN as a means of demonstrating that it is a nation well-suited to play a leadership role in the field of human rights protection. Second, this analysis will examine the current difficulties confronting the

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<sup>2</sup> David B. Dewitt and David Leyton-Brown, *Canada's International Security Policy* (Scarborough: Prentice Hall Canada Inc., 1995), p. 199.

<sup>3</sup> Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development, "Canada on the Security Council 1999-2000 - What Priorities?," <http://www.cfp-pec.gc.ca/english/cefpd/pages/natforum/2069280-e.htm>, accessed on 14/02/99.

UN in an international system that has changed rapidly during the post-Cold War period. Third, in order to address these new international challenges, the concept of human security - both its potential and factors that may hamper its success - will be explored in greater detail. Finally, recent efforts on the part of Canada to promote and implement certain human security objectives will be critically examined and, where feasible, practical recommendations will be put forward. It is beyond the scope of this analysis to conduct a detailed examination of the need for wide-ranging UN reform. Clearly, though, the implementation of innovative solutions to protect human rights will, to a great extent, depend upon the organization's ability to improve and update its structures and institutions. The UN is the only international organization in a position to address threats to international security and promote respect for human rights on a consistent basis. Its future legitimacy and relevance, however, will rest upon its ability to demonstrate that it is flexible in responding to new threats to security and human rights.

### **Canada and the UN: A Tradition of Multilateralism**

Canada emerged from World War II as a significant power in the world. Its economy had expanded substantially, it was strong politically, and Canadian policy makers employed a more activist strategy in world affairs.<sup>4</sup> It was also recognized that Canada's foreign policy was shaped largely by the international system in which it operated. Canada's best hope for influencing international issues depended upon the willingness of other nations, and

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<sup>4</sup> Tom Keating, *Canada and World Order: The Multilateralist Tradition in Canadian Foreign Policy* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Inc., 1993), p. 16.



principally the United States, to become involved in multilateral organizations and regimes.<sup>5</sup> Conflicts involving great powers, after all, would have direct repercussions for Canada, thereby underscoring the need to implement mechanisms to restrain countries from acting unilaterally. In addition, by the end of World War II, Canada relied heavily upon trade as a means of ensuring economic prosperity. Yet, officials realized that Canada did not have the economic power or political might to impose its particular vision of international order upon other states.<sup>6</sup> The establishment of credible multilateral institutions, leading to orderly interactions between states on a wide-range of issues, was seen to be in the best interests of Canada.

For policy makers, then, the primary objective in the post-World War II era was to secure the UN's legitimate place as a source of negotiation, compromise and peace in the emerging world order. Canadian efforts to achieve this reflected a willingness to promote global objectives, rather than those related to state sovereignty or a more narrow national perspective. Officials recognized that, through this approach, Canada's own interests would best be protected and enhanced over the longer term.<sup>7</sup> Since its inception, active involvement within the UN system has been a cornerstone of Canadian foreign policy. Canada, for example, has sat on the Security Council on six occasions (the most recent two-year term beginning on January 1, 1999).<sup>8</sup> In addition, Canada is a signatory to all major UN

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<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 176.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 36.

<sup>8</sup> Canada has served terms on the Security Council in 1948-49, 1958-59, 1967-68, 1977-78, 1989-90 and currently from 1999-2000.

Conventions and Covenants covering a wide-range of human rights issues, Canada has been a vocal supporter of the UN's growing human rights machinery, and government leaders have provided timely financial and personnel support to the UN in order to assist in promoting peace and stability, and respond to humanitarian crises.<sup>9</sup>

In the realm of human rights policy, the UN has proven to be Canada's venue of choice, leading some observers to remark that the government has pursued a one-track multilateral policy on this issue.<sup>10</sup> Canada's support for human rights at the UN, however, was not evident immediately. The Canadian delegation to the UN, for example, almost abstained from the final vote on the adoption of the UDHR in 1948. The government of the day asserted that its objectives were too vague and would, therefore, be impossible to implement. Moreover, given the two-tiered nature of Canadian federalism, Ottawa was reluctant to sign a document that might be perceived as infringing upon the constitutional responsibilities of the provinces.<sup>11</sup> Canada, in the end, did vote in support of this document. Observers have noted that this decision was made less out of support for the UDHR, and more out of fear that by abstaining it would have joined the Eastern Bloc, Saudi Arabia and South Africa as the only states not supporting this document.<sup>12</sup> Despite this rather

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<sup>9</sup> For further information on Canada's participation within the UN see United Nations Association of Canada "Why Canada Should be on the Security Council", <http://www.unac.org/Canada/Security.Council.html>, accessed on 15/02/99.

<sup>10</sup> Cranford Pratt, "The Limited Place of Human Rights in Canadian Foreign Policy" in *Human Rights, Development and Foreign Policy: Canadian Perspectives*, Irving Brecher, ed. (Canada: The Institute for Research on Public Policy, 1989), p. 171.

<sup>11</sup> John P. Humphrey, *Human Rights & the United Nations a Great Adventure* (New York: Transnational Publishers, Inc., 1984), p. 72.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 71.

inauspicious start, however, Canada has proven to be an active supporter of the UN's human rights machinery, and its efforts to set appropriate human rights standards to which all nations should strive to achieve.

Perhaps one of the most notable contributions Canada has made to the UN has been in the development and promotion of peacekeeping. Since Lester B. Pearson's Nobel prize winning efforts to advance peacekeeping as a means to bringing an end to the Suez crisis in 1956, successive Canadian governments have participated in UN multilateral efforts to restore peace to troubled regions. Canadian peacekeepers have been seen as generally acceptable on political grounds, and Canadians have long been recognized for their competence in the technical aspects of peacekeeping.<sup>13</sup> For these reasons, Canada was able to step forward and play a leadership role in successive efforts to maintain international peace and security.

Although peacekeeping has been viewed principally as a means of preserving international stability, it also has important ramifications for the protection and promotion of human rights, particularly for civilians living in war-torn regions. Peacekeeping continues to be used as a means to bring an end to conflicts and support negotiated settlements to disputes. Moreover, peacekeeping, while respectful of the UN's Charter provisions regarding national sovereignty, has allowed the UN, at times, to employ more activist strategies in an effort to bring an end to conflicts. As the international system and the concept of peacekeeping continue to evolve, the linkage between peace and security and the protection

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<sup>13</sup> J.L. Granatstein, "Peacekeeping: Did Canada Make a Difference? And What Difference Did Peacekeeping Make to Canada?" in *Making a Difference? Canada's Foreign Policy in a Changing World Order*, p. 235.

and promotion of human rights is now more clear than ever.

### **The UN at a Crossroads**

The UN recently celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the UDHR. While positive results in the protection and promotion of human rights have often been slow in coming, the adoption of this document has led to a number of positive accomplishments and trends. The most striking achievement, perhaps, has been the creation of key international standards for the treatment of all people around the world. Almost all governments purport to accept these norms in principle if not in practice.<sup>14</sup> Although the non-legally binding nature of the Declaration has ensured that nations have violated both the content and the spirit of this document, its importance should not be understated. Through the setting of normative standards, to which all nations agree, the international community can now turn more readily to a common reference point in order to determine when and where violations of human rights have taken place.

The ensuing development of a vast network of human rights programs and machinery within the UN has allowed for a marked increase in the amount of human rights information collected and distributed among states. Through the work of the Human Rights Commission, its sub-committees and working groups, thematic and country specific rapporteurs, and the creation, in 1993, of the position of UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, the information-gathering capacity of the UN has never been greater. Moreover, UN human

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<sup>14</sup> Peter R. Baehr and Leon Gordenker, *The United Nations in the 1990s* (New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc., 1992), p. 115.

rights organs have encouraged and, to a certain extent, relied upon the active participation of the NGO community. Organizations such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and the International Commission of Jurists have proven to be valuable and reliable sources for human rights documentation.<sup>15</sup> These factors have led to an impressive level of human rights monitoring and evaluation. The great challenge now facing the international community is to build upon these positive steps and move from the realm of standard setting to implementation.

In this regard, the post-Cold War period represents a time of great promise as well as growing uncertainty for the UN. By the spring of 1997 ten of the seventeen ongoing conflicts were taking place within rather than between states.<sup>16</sup> These conflicts have been characterized by long-term cycles of violence, with little or no capacity to sustain a peaceful society.<sup>17</sup> Fighting factions are often made up of undisciplined groups who, in order to achieve their aims, employ gross violations of human rights. Civilians become primary targets in these conflicts; approximately eighty per cent of those killed in current wars are non-combatants, and, even more disturbing, approximately half of these people are children.<sup>18</sup> For the UN, and its member states, this poses new risks and complex challenges

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<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 116.

<sup>16</sup> Bhaskar Menon, "Making and Keeping the Peace" in *A Global Agenda: Issues Before the 52nd General Assembly of the United Nations*, John Tessitore and Susan Woolfson, eds. (United States of America: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers Inc., 1997), p. 5.

<sup>17</sup> Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, "Notes for an Address by the Hon. Lloyd Axworthy Minister of Foreign Affairs to the 52nd session of the United Nations General Assembly, September 25, 1997", [http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/english/news/statem~1/97\\_state\\_036e.htm](http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/english/news/statem~1/97_state_036e.htm), accessed on 17/11/97.

<sup>18</sup> Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, "Notes for an Address by the Honourable Lloyd Axworthy, Minister of Foreign Affairs to the United Nations Security Council - The Protection of Civilians in Armed

that cannot be met by relying upon traditional peacekeeping methods alone.

In the face of these difficulties, a number of positive trends have also emerged in recent years. First there has been a growing international consensus on the need to ensure perpetrators of human rights violations are held accountable for their actions. The recent approval for the creation of an International Criminal Court is a key example of this growing commitment. This initiative has been hailed as a vital tool in the protection and promotion of human rights. UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, in speaking of the need for such an institution, has stated:

the international criminal court is the symbol of our highest hopes for this unity of peace and justice. It is a vital part of an emerging system of international human rights protection...<sup>19</sup>

The establishment of a permanent court will serve two important objectives. First, it will provide a much improved legal means through which to punish those who commit heinous atrocities against human-kind.<sup>20</sup> In addition, the threat of international indictment from a permanent court may act as a potential deterrent to those contemplating the use of violence as a means to achieve military or political objectives.<sup>21</sup> In short, this institution, through the

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Conflict, February 12, 1999", <http://www.undp.org/missions/Canada/html/s-12feb99axworthy.htm>, accessed on 14/02/99.

<sup>19</sup> United Nations Secretary-General Press Release 12/06/97 SG/SM/6257, <http://www.un.org>, accessed on 30/11/97.

<sup>20</sup> W. Andy Knight, "Legal Issues" in *A Global Agenda: Issues Before the 52nd General Assembly of the United Nations*, p. 284.

<sup>21</sup> Sharon A. Williams, "The Establishment of an International Criminal Tribunal: Is the Time Ripe?" in *United Nations Reform: Looking Ahead After 50 Years*, Eric Fawcett and Hanna Newcombe, eds. (Toronto: Dundurn Press, Ltd., 1995), p. 289.

enforcement of international laws in a more consistent fashion, will serve to bring the international community one step closer to an effective system of universal justice, an objective that most states would agree is of vital importance.

Furthermore, in recent years, the UN Security Council has shown itself to be willing to play a more activist and interventionist role in world affairs. The significance of this lies in the fact that, as security and human rights concerns become more closely interlinked, the role of the Security Council in protecting and promoting human rights will become more important than ever before. With the coming to an end of the Cold War, the high degree of tension that once permeated Security Council discussions, particularly among the permanent five, has been replaced by a growing sense of accommodation and decision-making by consensus.<sup>22</sup> For the first time since its inception, the Council has been able to operate more closely in a manner envisioned by those who originally drafted the Charter.<sup>23</sup> Not only is the Council addressing issues that would have been inconceivable during the Cold War, but it is turning with increasing regularity to Chapter VII enforcement actions - a measure once considered virtually unusable - in an effort to restore and maintain international stability.<sup>24</sup>

To illustrate this point, a number of key examples can be highlighted. The UN's unprecedented response to the Iraq invasion of Kuwait, as well as less successful UN interventions in the former Yugoslavia, Somalia and Rwanda all point to a more activist UN

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<sup>22</sup> James O.C. Jonah, "Differing State Perspectives on the United Nations in the Post-Cold War World" [http://www.brown.edu/Deprtments/ACUNS/NEW\\_publications/Jonah/Jonah.Part1.shtml](http://www.brown.edu/Deprtments/ACUNS/NEW_publications/Jonah/Jonah.Part1.shtml), accessed on 02/11/97.

<sup>23</sup> Dewitt and Leyton-Brown, p. 216.

<sup>24</sup> Jonah, "Differing State Perspectives on the United Nations in the Post-Cold War World"

willing to take measures in response to mass violations of human rights.<sup>25</sup> To-date, however, decisions to intervene have been made in an arbitrary fashion. The Security Council has played "...neither a consistent nor effective role in conflict prevention and conflict resolution. It has shown itself unable and/or unwilling (other than in a selective and ad hoc manner) to pre-empt or respond to internal strife, massive population displacement or human rights abuses."<sup>26</sup> For example, while violent internal conflicts rage on in countries such as Sudan, Angola and the Congo, the UN has failed to take decisive action. As the UN struggles to address the changing nature of conflict, it has yet to determine when and where such interventions should take place and what objectives (beyond bringing an end to the immediate fighting) should such interventions strive to achieve.

The UN is at a crossroads. In order for the organization to continue to play a legitimate and useful role in the maintenance of international stability, a fundamental rethinking of peace and security initiatives is necessary.<sup>27</sup> The legitimacy of the UN will rest, to a great extent, on its ability to demonstrate that it can be flexible and innovative in responding to new types of threats. This will require the development of approaches that are based on the establishment of clear criteria in order to "...codify systems and procedures for international response and...begin to counter the culture of impunity that prevails in the

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<sup>25</sup> Ruth Gordon, Article 2(7) Revisited: The Post-Cold War Security Council, [http://www.brown.edu/Departments/ACUNS/NEW\\_publications\\_2.7/2.7.Chap2.shtml](http://www.brown.edu/Departments/ACUNS/NEW_publications_2.7/2.7.Chap2.shtml), accessed on 15/10/97.

<sup>26</sup> Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development, "Canada on the Security Council 1999-2000: What Priorities?"

<sup>27</sup> Joseph Jockel, "Canada and International Peacekeeping: An American View" in *The New Peacekeeping Partnership*, Alex Morrison, ed. (Canada: Government of Canada, 1995), p. 153; see also United Nations, <http://www.un.org/reform/> for a further overview of reform initiatives.



majority of today's armed conflicts."<sup>28</sup> For Canada, as a nation well-versed in promoting an activist and effective UN, policy makers must play a key role in this transformation.

### **Promoting Human Security: The Need for Innovation**

Canada recently embarked upon a two-year position on the Security Council. During its campaign for a seat, officials promoted the concept of human security and argued that the Council must be ready to play an interventionist role as a means of protecting against serious violations of human rights.<sup>29</sup> In February of 1999, Canada opened its month long presidency of the Council by calling for enhanced protection for civilian victims of conflict. Referring to the ongoing fighting in Sierra Leone, the Balkans and the Great Lakes region of Africa, Foreign Affairs Minister, Lloyd Axworthy asserted:

...the threats to human security - the risks that individuals, communities, people face in their daily lives - outweigh the risks to security occasioned by conflicts across border, which have been the more traditional concern of the Council. The promotion of human security is the bedrock upon which all other objectives of the UN Charter must rest...<sup>30</sup>

The UN, in other words, should address such threats to a civilian population - as a result of war, famine or a repressive regime - in the same way it has addressed more traditional aggressive military actions between states.

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<sup>28</sup> Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development, "Canada on the Security Council 1999-2000: What Priorities?"

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, "Notes For an Address by the Honourable Lloyd Axworthy, Minister of Foreign Affairs to the United Nations Security Council - the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict, February 12, 1999"

The concept of human security, however, is controversial in nature. This notion poses a direct challenge to the long-standing principle of the inviolability of state sovereignty. Although a more proactive UN role has been widely applauded in principle, in practice constant forays outside of the explicit guidelines within the Charter might lead states to question the legitimacy of the UN and its respect for international law.<sup>31</sup> After all, the provisions within the Charter are "...oriented to the preservation of order, not the protection of human rights."<sup>32</sup> Undoubtedly, as the Council undertakes responsibilities for which little direct authority exists within the UN Charter, beyond its primary role of ensuring international peace and security, questions regarding the legitimacy of such decisions will arise.

In addressing the principle of human security, two distinct, yet inextricably linked concepts - humanitarian intervention and peacebuilding - must be examined. Humanitarian intervention refers to the "...threat or use of force by a state, group of states, or international organization primarily for the purpose of protecting the nationals of the target state from widespread deprivations of universally recognized human rights."<sup>33</sup> Although intervention is most often thought of in military terms, it can encompass a range of measures from the threat or use of force, economic sanctions and emergency relief assistance (i.e. the provision

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<sup>31</sup> Ruth Gordon, "Article 2.7 Revisited: The Post Cold War Security Council"

<sup>32</sup> Sean D. Murphy, *Humanitarian Intervention: The United Nations in an Evolving World Order* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), p. 2.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.* , p. 11.

of food and medical aid to a civilian population).<sup>34</sup>

The issue of humanitarian intervention addresses certain core values upon which the UN system has been built. Specifically, does the UN have the right and/or obligation to intervene in the affairs of a nation whose citizens are being subjected to widespread human rights violations?<sup>35</sup> The answer must unequivocally be yes. Recognizing the importance the Charter places on the principles of state sovereignty and international order should not result in inaction when it comes to the protection and promotion of human rights. Furthermore, there is a clear relationship between the protection of human rights and the maintenance of a more peaceful international system. According to the Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development:

There is no need for any justification of intervention (by the United Nations) beyond the existence of a threat to international peace and security. As serious breaches of human security almost always create such threats - through flows of refugees, for instance - interventions could be justified on those grounds, and this would be a safer way than seeking to justify intervention on strict humanitarian grounds.<sup>36</sup>

If the international community is to adopt the principle of human security as a reasonable grounds for intervention it would, in effect, be a direct recognition of the fact that the domestic policies of a government do have international ramifications. A government, therefore, should not be able to hide behind the principle of state sovereignty in an effort to

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<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 7-20.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>36</sup> Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development, "Canada on the Security Council 1999-2000: What Priorities?"

deflect concerns regarding intolerable actions against its own population.

Whereas humanitarian intervention addresses the need for quick and decisive international action to protect human rights, peacebuilding refers to the longer term measures necessary in order to address the root causes of conflict and human rights abuse. Peacebuilding is a flexible concept, and efforts to build peace in regions marred by conflict can take many forms. These include: the disarming of warring parties, repatriation of refugees, advisory and training support for security and police forces, election monitoring, strengthening government institutions, advancing efforts to protect human rights, promoting both formal and informal processes of political participation, and linking parties together through the development of mutually beneficial cooperative projects.<sup>37</sup> In recent years, the issue of peacebuilding has come to the forefront and there is a strong argument to be made that all UN peace and security initiatives require a substantial peacebuilding component. For example, the previous UN Secretary General, Boutros Boutros Ghali, in his 1992 report: *An Agenda for Peace*, stated:

Peacemaking and peacekeeping operations, to be truly successful, must come to include comprehensive efforts to identify and support structures which will tend to consolidate peace and advance a sense of confidence and well-being among people.<sup>38</sup>

Peacebuilding, in other words, requires a longer term commitment by the international

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<sup>37</sup> Boutros Boutros Ghali, *An Agenda for Peace* (New York: The United Nations, 1992, p. 32. Also for a comprehensive overview of peacebuilding from a Canadian perspective see Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, "Canada and Peacebuilding: The Canadian Peacebuilding Initiative", [http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/peacebuilding/cpi\\_strategic\\_framework-e.asp](http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/peacebuilding/cpi_strategic_framework-e.asp), accessed on 13/05/98.

<sup>38</sup> Ghali, p. 32.

community in order to ensure that violations of human rights do not reoccur once an international presence is removed.

Despite the growing support for the concept of human security, and its promotion of humanitarian intervention and peacebuilding, a number of key obstacles will continue to inhibit the UN in its efforts to build effective and lasting solutions. Specifically, inadequate financing, a lack of resources, and uncertainty over the degree to which member states possess the political will to involve themselves in internal crises all serve to hinder the UN's ability to respond to new threats to international security. Clearly, if this organization is to contribute successfully to long-term peace and human security, financial, organizational and operational requirements will be needed in a much greater magnitude than what the UN currently has at its disposal.

With respect to the issue of resource constraints, many of the current difficulties facing the UN have resulted, quite simply, from the growing popularity of peacekeeping as the international community's tool of choice for conflict containment. For example, between 1947 and 1985, the UN undertook thirteen peacekeeping operations of varying scope and duration.<sup>39</sup> Conversely, between 1988 and 1996, twenty-nine new missions were undertaken.<sup>40</sup> Currently there are sixteen missions operating world-wide.<sup>41</sup> This has stretched both the capacity of the UN, and the ability for member states to contribute to these

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<sup>39</sup> William J. Durch, *The Evolution of UN Peacekeeping: Case Studies and Comparative Analysis* (New York: St Martin's Press, Inc., 1993), p. 7.

<sup>40</sup> Menon, p. 3.

<sup>41</sup> United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations, <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/faq.htm>, accessed on 10/03/98.

missions, to the limit. Compounding this problem is the degree to which the peacekeeping umbrella has expanded since the end of the Cold War. Missions now routinely include humanitarian aid agencies, professional police, human rights observers and good government officials.<sup>42</sup> These multi-dimensional initiatives require a much higher degree of coordination and cooperation among UN personnel. This, in turn, has placed further strains on the organization's already limited resources.

Closely linked to this lack of necessary resources, is the issue of inadequate financing. In recent years the cost of peacekeeping has risen at a rapid rate. In 1990, for example, the annual UN peacekeeping budget stood at approximately \$700 million. Yet, by 1995, this number had jumped to approximately \$2.8 billion. Since then, however, the peacekeeping budget has declined rapidly, and in 1997 was less than the \$1.3 billion regular budget.<sup>43</sup> This decline has coincided with the development of a serious financial crisis for the UN, and has been further compounded by the fact that by 1997 unpaid peacekeeping dues to the organization stood at \$1.65 billion.<sup>44</sup> While requests for UN intervention and assistance continue to rise:

...the organization can only be asked to do as much or as little as its members are willing to agree on and pay for. The difficulty of late is that they have been agreeing much more readily than they have been paying.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> See for example Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, "Peacebuilding and Human Security" <http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/ONU2000UN/fa-07txt-g.htm>, accessed on 04/12/97.

<sup>43</sup> Menon, p. 9.

<sup>44</sup> Durch, p. 2.

<sup>45</sup> Ernie Regehr, "The Future of Peacekeeping" in *The Changing Face of Peacekeeping*, Alex Morrison ed., (Canada: The Government of Canada, 1993), p. 30.

This financial crisis will continue to determine the degree to which the UN can become involved in human security initiatives. Efforts, for example, to sustain post-war cease-fires and assist in the implementation and maintenance of peace agreements will require an increased financial commitment from the UN and its member states. These costs will undoubtedly dampen the enthusiasm of states to participate in such initiatives. Unless the UN is able to draw further upon the resources of its membership, or find alternative sources of financing, the future of peacekeeping, let alone more comprehensive human security initiatives, will remain uncertain.

Finally, maintaining the political support of member states for wide-ranging human security initiatives will continue to be a difficult task. The question of political will has become even more critical as the UN encounters a growing number of intrastate conflicts where, not only has civil society broken down, but there is no clear sense of whether or not UN personnel are even welcome. Many developing nations, for whom colonialism is still a recent memory, are wary of UN efforts to intervene without the consent of a host country. Furthermore, high profile failures to save lives and bring lasting peace to the former Yugoslavia, Somalia and Rwanda all serve to underscore the difficulty facing the UN in generating the political will to undertake a more activist role. In each of these cases, the Security Council undertook humanitarian actions in order to save lives, but found itself entangled in no-win civil wars.<sup>46</sup> In the aftermath of these missions, "...those who were vocal a few years ago in asserting that the Security Council has the right of humanitarian

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<sup>46</sup> Menon, p. 1.

intervention seem to have fallen silent."<sup>47</sup>

This attitude continues to prevail among key permanent members of the Security Council. In response to recent calls by Canada to intervene in the conflict in Sierra Leone in order to protect civilians, for example, countries such as China and Russia have warned that such an approach would create more problems than it solves.<sup>48</sup> According to one Russian representative, "The destruction of the UN system is too high a price to pay to resolve humanitarian problems."<sup>49</sup> It would seem that key members of the Council are not anxious to play a more active role at the risk of failure and, ultimately, a loss of credibility in the eyes of member states.

Rather than backing away from efforts to protect human rights, however, the Council must develop a strong mandate and vision for such intervention. To be effective, clear criteria or 'trigger mechanisms' must be developed in order to clarify when international action is warranted. The development of such criteria would serve a number of important purposes. First, it would set a clear standard of action in order to protect against gross and systematic abuses of human rights. Second, it may serve to depoliticize the highly charged nature of Security Council decision-making. The UN has long been criticized for the political nature of its decisions and its willingness to act in some cases and remain silent in others.<sup>50</sup> The establishment of a trigger mechanism, then, may serve to overshadow political

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<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>48</sup> Paul Knox, "Canada Asks UN to Intervene in Sierra Leone: Security Council Prodded to Consider Civilian Welfare in War-torn Country" *Globe and Mail*, 13 February, 1999, p. A13.

<sup>49</sup> As quoted in Knox., p. A13.

<sup>50</sup> See, for example, Jonah who describes the Cold War Security Council as "a laughingstock and a symbol of the



considerations and allow for action to take place on a more consistent basis. Finally, the establishment of such criteria may play a positive preventative role. History has demonstrated that some national leaders continue to perpetuate actions, leading to serious human rights violations, with the confidence that their impunity will be guaranteed.<sup>51</sup> Moreover, recent cases suggest that even when the UN has acted, its responses have been insufficient and poorly timed. In the case of Somalia, the intervention did not succeed in addressing the root causes of starvation and violence. In Rwanda, as many as 500,000 people died in two months, while a small UN contingent looked on. In Bosnia approximately 250,000 Muslims were killed over a two year period while the UN and a number of regional organizations struggled to find an appropriate course of action.<sup>52</sup> If clear criteria for intervention had been in place, thereby allowing quick and more decisive UN action, it is possible that such tragedies could have been avoided or, at the very least, would have been much less severe. In the present context, however, UN actions will continue to consist of a series of ad hoc efforts consisting mainly of providing emergency food and medical assistance to conflict-ridden people.<sup>53</sup> In other words, actions will continue to address the symptoms and not the causes of human rights violations.

Clearly, the difficulties plaguing the UN have hindered its ability to play a more

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futility of international efforts to resolve conflicts."

<sup>51</sup> Abdoulaye Diop, "Humanitarianism and Sovereignty: The State Versus Human Rights" <http://www.ichrdd.ca/PublicationsE/Humanitarianism.html>, accessed on 19/01/98.

<sup>52</sup> Murphy, p. 315.

<sup>53</sup> For an excellent account of the ongoing conflict in the Sudan and the minimal international humanitarian response to this crisis please see William Finnegan, "The Invisible War" *The New Yorker*, 25 January, 1999, pp. 50-73.

active role in protecting against gross and systematic violations of human rights. While member states speak routinely of the need for the UN to become more flexible and innovative in its actions, they often fail to provide the necessary resources, finances and political backing to allow the organization to respond to the challenge. In order for the UN to retain its credibility on peace and security matters, and ultimately human rights concerns, member states will "...have to demonstrate a good deal more political will and practical support than they have to-date."<sup>54</sup>

### **An Innovative Role for Canada**

The UN continues to be the only multilateral organization in a position to deal with international human rights crises. At present, however, it lacks the infrastructure and experience to address such issues in anything but an ad hoc and reactive fashion. In light of this, it will be difficult to maintain long-term support for an activist Security Council that is willing and able to intervene in the name of human rights protection.

In response to these challenges, Canada has, in recent years, brought forward a number of innovative initiatives with the objective of making a consistent human security policy more feasible. In order to address the difficulties caused by insufficient resources and a lack of infrastructure, for example, policy makers have put forward a number of worthwhile proposals. In 1995, Canada tabled a report at the UN entitled: *Toward a Rapid Reaction Capability for the United Nations*. The report's main proposal calls upon the UN to assemble

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<sup>54</sup> Tom Keating, "The Future of Multilateralism" in *Canada Among Nations 1994: A Part of the Peace*, Maureen Appel Molot and Harold Von Riekhoff, eds. (Canada: Carleton University Press Inc., 1994), p. 65.

a multi-functional force of up to 5,000 military and civilian personnel who could be deployed quickly in order to preserve and restore peace and security.<sup>55</sup> A key to the success of the concept of humanitarian intervention will rest on the ability of the UN to react quickly and decisively to protect human rights. The sooner UN personnel become involved in a crisis situation, the better the organization's chances for securing long-term peace and true protection and promotion of human rights.<sup>56</sup> Quite simply, such measures, if backed by adequate military force and capable civilian personnel, provide a much better alternative than empty rhetoric and endless after-the-fact humanitarian aid.<sup>57</sup> The existence of such a force may also play an important preventative role. If a government is contemplating action that may lead to serious violations of human rights, the threat of rapid deployment of a well-trained and sufficiently prepared UN force may have the effect of thwarting such a crisis. If adopted, the recommendations put forward in this report will be an important step towards enhancing the UN's capability to pursue interventionist strategies in a more consistent fashion. Similarly, the Canadian government has submitted a roster of Canadian human rights experts who can be made available to the UN on short notice.<sup>58</sup> This initiative will assist the UN in its ability to provide a rapid and effective response, with trained and

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<sup>55</sup> See for example Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, "Notes for an Address by the Honourable Andre Ouellet, Minister of Foreign Affairs, to the 50th General Assembly of the United Nations - September 12, 1995" [http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/english/news/statem-1/95\\_state/95-53e.htm](http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/english/news/statem-1/95_state/95-53e.htm), accessed on 17/11/97.

<sup>56</sup> David Cox and Albert Legault eds., *UN Rapid Reaction Capabilities: Requirements and Prospects* (Clementsport, Nova Scotia: The Peacekeeping Press, 1995), p. 120.

<sup>57</sup> Fen Osler Hampson and Dean Oliver, "Pulpit Diplomacy: A Critical Assessment of the Axworthy Doctrine" *International Journal* 53, No. 3, (1998), p. 395.

<sup>58</sup> Geoffrey Pearson, "Peacekeeping and Canadian Policy" in *United Nations Reform: Looking Ahead After Fifty*

knowledgeable personnel, when called upon.

Canada has also opened the Lester B. Pearson Peacekeeping Centre in Clementsport, Nova Scotia. Canada's vast experience in the field of peacekeeping makes it well qualified to act as a centre for training UN military and civilian personnel earmarked for duty.<sup>59</sup> This type of training centre can play an important role in addressing the UN's lack of experience in responding to non-traditional types of conflict. Through enhanced training and education, military and civilian personnel can gain a better understanding of the need for a multifaceted approach to such initiatives. Participants can benefit, not only from an improved knowledge of the workings of the UN, but of other agencies involved in areas such as humanitarian relief and economic development, "activities which sometimes appear to be at cross-purposes with military action."<sup>60</sup>

Effective and timely intervention in order to address violations of human rights, though, is only a part of the answer. Longer-term efforts to build peace and ensure that, once UN personnel leave, human rights violations will not reoccur, are essential components of an effective strategy. In a 1996 speech to the UN General Assembly, Minister Axworthy addressed the need to refocus efforts in areas such as peacebuilding. Citing the failure to prevent violent conflict in Rwanda, he stated:

What is clear is the need for a new tool kit for the UN to respond...we have started to rework our own tool kit to improve our ability to initiate and support peace-

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*Years*, p. 120.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 120.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 120.

building operations in areas such as preventive mediation and dialogue, human rights monitoring and investigation, media and police training, judicial reform, and demobilization.<sup>61</sup>

In an effort to promote this concept, Canada, in 1996, announced a \$10 million annual Canadian Peacebuilding Initiative.<sup>62</sup> This program was designed in an effort to coordinate Canada's policies and programs in the areas of conflict prevention, peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction. Through this fund, Canada has supported a number of peacebuilding initiatives. These include: assisting the Preparatory Commission for the Establishment of the International Criminal Court by underwriting the participation of delegates from developing countries, providing start-up funding for the Guatemala Historical Clarification Commission, contributing \$500,000 to the new UN Trust Fund for Preventative Action, and announcing its intention to contribute an equal amount for the establishment of an NGO foundation in Bosnia to help develop a civil society on the basis of multi-ethnic cooperation.<sup>63</sup>

Certainly the creation of a peacebuilding fund is a worthwhile and necessary endeavour. Through such efforts, Canada has demonstrated a willingness to make tangible contributions to improve the potential for peacebuilding as a viable UN activity. There are,

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<sup>61</sup> Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, "Notes for an Address by the Hon. Lloyd Axworthy Minister of Foreign Affairs to the 51st General Assembly of the United Nations, September 24, 1996", [http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/english/news/statem-1/96\\_state/96\\_037e.htm](http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/english/news/statem-1/96_state/96_037e.htm), accessed on 17/11/97.

<sup>62</sup> Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, "Notes for an Address by the Hon. Lloyd Axworthy, Minister of Foreign Affairs, at York University - Building Peace to Last: Establishing a Canadian Peacebuilding Initiative, October 30, 1996", [http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/english/news/statem-1/96\\_state/96\\_046e.htm](http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/english/news/statem-1/96_state/96_046e.htm), accessed on 17/11/97.

<sup>63</sup> For a comprehensive overview of Canadian peacebuilding initiatives see Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, "Canadian Peacebuilding Experience", [http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/peacebuilding/cpe\\_annex-](http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/peacebuilding/cpe_annex-)

however, a number of factors that may serve to inhibit the overall effectiveness of this program and detract from the development of a coherent strategy. First, \$10 million represents only a fraction of the actual financial resources needed to implement a comprehensive peacebuilding program. Furthermore, Canada is not allocating new money in order to establish this fund. Federal dollars, therefore, are merely being redirected from other vital areas such as Canada's Official Development Assistance budget.<sup>64</sup> Peacebuilding activities, in other words, may in fact be conducted at the expense of, rather than in concert with, other important international assistance programs.

Secondly, Canada's peacebuilding efforts to-date have focussed on providing "occasional support to national elites and institutions".<sup>65</sup> Critics assert that this has had the effect of promoting quick fix solutions rather than developing a long-term strategy. The current government has adopted a project-oriented approach in determining the allocation of peacebuilding funds. Qualifying projects are short-term (maximum of 18 months) in nature and are eligible to receive a one-time financial commitment of up to \$500,000.<sup>66</sup> Although such interventions are an important component in order to ensure sustainable peace, there is a real danger that the program lacks the flexibility and long-term vision necessary to be a truly effective tool. Peacebuilding is, after all, by its very nature rooted in

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e.asp, accessed on 15/01/99.

<sup>64</sup> For a critical analysis of peacebuilding see Hampson and Oliver, pp. 385-388.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 386.

<sup>66</sup> Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, "Canada and Peacebuilding", <http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/peacebuilding/index-e.asp>, accessed on 20/06/98.

the building of relationships and trust.<sup>67</sup> It is a process that requires patience and a commitment to building trust and confidence. Yet, in focussing on immediate objectives, which are often bound by parameters such as time and the completion of specific tasks, this initiative is in danger of falling far short of its overall potential.

Despite recent high profile shortcomings in countries such as Somalia, Rwanda, and the Great Lakes region of Africa, there is some evidence to suggest that human security initiatives can be an effective tool in promoting peace and respect for human rights. UN peacekeeping efforts in Haiti have entailed a substantial peacebuilding component, including civilian police training, coordination of institution building and national conciliation and economic rehabilitation activities.<sup>68</sup> In addition, civilian peace missions, in countries such as El Salvador and Guatemala, are playing an important role in promoting stability, encouraging former belligerents to respect human rights, rebuilding state institutions, and bringing justice and lasting peace.<sup>69</sup> While these missions represent an important step in an effort to promote human security, clearly much more needs to be done. The UN continues to struggle to reconcile increasing requests for assistance with its often limited means to initiate long-term strategies to promote peace and protect human rights.

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<sup>67</sup> John Paul Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, 1997), pp. 130-135.

<sup>68</sup> Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, "Notes for an Address by the Hon. Lloyd Axworthy, Minister of Foreign Affairs, at York University, Building Peace to Last: Establishing a Canadian Peacebuilding Initiative" also see United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations at <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/>, accessed on 18/06/98.

<sup>69</sup> United Nations Peacekeeping Operations, "Studying the Past While Planning for the Future", <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/yr96/study.htm>, accessed on 17/11/97. Also see Minugua United Nations Mission for the Verification of Human Rights in Guatemala, <http://www.un.org.Depts/minugua/>, accessed on 20/06/98.

In order for the UN to retain its credibility as an organization well-equipped to respond to new crises, a number of reforms must be initiated. These reforms should encompass the practical workings of UN activities and address the more fundamental need to restructure the operations of the UN itself. In terms of promoting the concept of human security, Canada should push for change in two specific areas. First, policy makers must stress the need for greater cooperation between the UN and like-minded regional organizations. Given the current resource and financial constraints facing the UN, building closer links with regional bodies may prove to be a practical and attractive alternative. Critics of this approach will undoubtedly point out that these organizations are, by and large, far less capable than the UN in maintaining peace and protecting human rights.<sup>70</sup> Certainly, this is a valid concern. Most regional organizations lack the military, economic or political power to play an effective role in conducting human security initiatives.<sup>71</sup> Even in the case of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), which has both the organizational capability and military power necessary to take action, experiences in the former Yugoslavia have demonstrated a need for organizations to work closely together in times of crisis. Mistakes such as launching air strikes under the control of one organization (NATO) and ground efforts under another (UN) have served to reinforce the need for effective communications and the establishment of common strategies and objectives.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Roger A. Coate et al., *The United Nations and Changing World Politics* (Boulder: Westview Press, Inc., 1994), p. 35.

<sup>71</sup> Murphy, p. 336.

<sup>72</sup> For an excellent analysis of this issue see Douglas Hurd, "Responding to Kosovo, and Other Crises to Come" *Globe and Mail*, 12 February, 1999, p. A17.



It is important that the UN strives to improve its working relationship with regional organizations. This includes improving systems of information and resource sharing as well as assisting in the development of logistical capacity. Such a strategy would accomplish a number of goals. First, it would clearly strengthen the UN's early warning capability by allowing for more timely updates and reports from organizations that may already have representatives on the ground.<sup>73</sup> Moreover, regional representatives are often best situated to address the threat of conflict. They have a better understanding of the factors involved including, the history of the situation, the personalities and objectives of the leaders perpetrating the violence, and the actions necessary to prevent widespread human rights abuse. Yet these same organizations often have little capacity or political power to play an effective preventive role or to restore peace. Efforts to build closer relationships between specific regional bodies and the Security Council may have the effect of legitimizing the work of the organization. This, in turn, may allow it to apply more pressure upon those who are promoting the escalation of violence. Finally, on occasions where Security Council consensus cannot be reached regarding the need for Chapter VII measures in order to protect human rights, regional bodies may prove to be a reasonable and more likely alternative for action.<sup>74</sup> Providing adequate support to regional organizations, therefore, may prove to be an effective - and at times the only - way to overcome a stalemate and take measures to protect and promote human rights. Quite simply:

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<sup>73</sup> James B. Sutterlin, *The United Nations and the Maintenance of International Security: A Challenge to be Met* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1995), pp. 109-110.

<sup>74</sup> Murphy, p. 349.

The UN will become a stronger force for peace if it persists in efforts for a more productive relationship with the regional groupings and for improved effectiveness on their parts even if the results are some time in coming.<sup>75</sup>

Although one must be careful not to overstate the capabilities of regional organizations, with adequate UN support they have the potential to play a more effective role in, not only identifying potential crisis situations, but in addressing situations where human rights are being threatened or disregarded.

Similarly, Canada should push for closer cooperation between UN agencies and the human rights NGO community. Cooperation with NGOs has long been an important component for the UN and its human rights machinery. In a 1994 meeting of special rapporteurs and working groups of the Human Rights Commission, officials called upon "non-governmental organizations whose work and information is crucial to human rights protection and effective discharge of their own mandate to continue providing us with relevant information and ideas."<sup>76</sup> NGOs have played an important role as a provider of information vis-a-vis the human rights records of various states. In addition, NGOs continue to provide valuable services in areas such as legal aid, training, public advocacy and broad education services in the field of human rights.<sup>77</sup>

The work of human rights NGOs has been particularly important during periods of

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<sup>75</sup> Sutterlin, p. 111.

<sup>76</sup> Felice D. Gaer, "Reality Check: Human Rights NGOs Confront Governments at the UN" in *NGOs, the UN, and Global Governance*, Thomas G. Weiss and Leon Gordenker, eds. (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 1996), p. 55.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 58.

conflict. Such organizations have been active in all areas where gross and systematic violations of human rights have taken place in recent years. During the crisis in the Great Lakes region of Africa, for example, the work of seven UN agencies was complemented by ten well-respected international NGOs focusing on relief and economic development activities.<sup>78</sup> The strength of an NGO presence also lies in their growing efforts to establish indigenous organizations made up of people working within their own country to provide services during times of crisis. In Liberia, in 1990, for example, all UN and international NGO staff (including the International Committee of the Red Cross) had been forced to leave the country. Yet with the support of the US based Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), local NGOs and communities continued to run relief efforts in order to provide food, water and medical care to 500,000 people.<sup>79</sup> In short, organizations working at the grassroots level are playing an important and complementary role to UN efforts to promote a respect for human rights within government.

As the UN shifts its focus towards implementation, and contemplates more proactive measures to achieve its objectives, the need for greater cooperation is paramount. Currently, too many crises are sapping too few resources from within the UN and NGO communities. Yet, both sides continue to remain wary of working more closely with each other. Quite simply, many NGOs lack either the will or self-discipline to surrender autonomy and integrate their work with other actors. In contrast, UN agencies working in specific countries

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<sup>78</sup> James F. Miskel and Richard J. Norton, "Humanitarian Early-Warning Systems" in *Global Governance: A Review of Multilateralism and International Organizations* Volume 4, No. 3 (July - September, 1998), p. 322.

<sup>79</sup> Andrew S. Natsios, "NGOs and the UN System in Complex Humanitarian Emergencies: Conflict or Cooperation" in *NGOs, the UN, and Global Governance*, p. 71.

often have weak field operations. They are mandated to work mostly with governments and are, therefore, not heavily involved with grassroots organizations.<sup>80</sup> Given the growing number of conflicts leading to serious human rights violations, it is clear that NGOs and UN agencies must work together more closely than has been the case to-date. Efforts should be made to find ways to coordinate strategies in order to implement coherent and effective plans to protect and promote human rights.

Finally, although it is beyond the scope of this analysis to examine the issue of UN reform in any comprehensive fashion, certain fundamental issues must be addressed. Member states have long recognized, for example, the need for improved efficiency within UN operations. The continued unwillingness of the US government to pay financial arrears totalling over \$1.5 billion, until substantial reforms are conducted, serves as a constant reminder of this fact.<sup>81</sup> Secretary General Kofi Annan has announced a series of wide-ranging reform measures aimed at addressing these concerns.<sup>82</sup> This is a process that Canada must whole-heartedly support. Without significant institutional reform and cost-saving measures, the future viability of the UN, let alone its ability to promote and protect human rights, will be very much in doubt. Given Canada's own efforts to streamline government services and programs in recent years, Canadian officials are in an ideal position to offer technical assistance during this reform process.

Budget cutting alone, however, is not the answer. Minister Axworthy, in a 1997

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<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 75-76.

<sup>81</sup> Andrew Cohen, "World-weary US Looking Inward" *Globe and Mail*, 22, September, 1997, p. A1.

<sup>82</sup> For a more detailed overview of UN reform initiatives please see United Nations "Renewing the United Nations:

speech to the UN, called for significant structural reform in order to modernize existing institutions.<sup>83</sup> One institution of particular relevance to the future of human rights protection is the Security Council. In recent years, many member states have expressed concerns regarding the lack of transparency and the closed-door nature of Council operations. Without genuine efforts to reform this body, the UN is in real danger of losing credibility in the eyes of member states.<sup>84</sup> Recognizing the need for such reform, Canada, during its campaign for a Council seat, committed itself to pushing for greater openness in Council deliberations, improvements in the flow of communications and information to the larger UN membership, and improved coordination with the General Assembly.<sup>85</sup> Certainly, Security Council reform will be difficult to achieve. Furthermore, it is not clear how much attention the permanent members will give to calls for reform by nations who are at the table on a non-permanent basis. This issue has gained particular urgency in light of more recent humanitarian and peacebuilding initiatives. Quite simply, the UN's presence will be required in unstable regions for longer periods of time. If member states are to approve of a more proactive UN in the realm of human rights, then, in return, its main peace and security organ must become more representative of the international environment in which it operates.

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A Programme for Reform", <http://www.un.org/reform/>, accessed on 03/06/98.

<sup>83</sup> Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade "Notes for an Address by the Hon. Lloyd Axworthy Minister of Foreign Affairs to the 52nd Session of the United Nations General Assembly, September 25, 1997"

<sup>84</sup> Coate et al., p. 93.

<sup>85</sup> Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development, "Canada on the Security Council 1999-2000: What Priorities?"

## **Conclusion**

The nature of international relations has changed profoundly in recent years. New types of wars have brought complex challenges as well as new types of threats to international security and, hence, human rights protection. Not only must the UN focus on traditional peacekeeping methods to separate warring parties, but there is also a greater need to focus on the economic, social and political causes of conflict and abuse of human rights. At present, many obstacles continue to impede the UN from addressing these issues in a consistent and effective manner. The high financial costs involved in investing in long-term peace initiatives, a lack of adequate resources, and the often low levels of political will among member states to play a more active role will continue to hinder efforts to restore peace and build a greater respect for human rights.

Canada has the capacity to play a leading role in promoting the concept of human security within the UN system. It is a country well respected for its strong history of contributing to UN peace and security efforts. The current government has demonstrated a growing interest in, and commitment to, addressing the root causes of conflict and gross and systematic violations of human rights. Yet, even the positive initiatives that Canada has put forward to-date represent, at best, a modest first step. A more activist UN approach to human rights will require that policies are implemented in a consistent fashion if they are to have a real and lasting impact. This will require greater commitments of both finances and resources from the international community. Canada certainly cannot take on this task alone. As a nation that prides itself on its ability to build international consensus, however, it can play a leading role in promoting the concept of human security and in doing so, garner

greater international support for a UN which is committed to human rights protection both in principle and practice.

#### **Chapter Four - Neglected Responsibility? Human Rights in a Bilateral Context**

In contrast to Canada's activist role within the UN, policy makers have been far more cautious in addressing human rights objectives in the context of bilateral relations.<sup>1</sup> Asserting that a middle power such as Canada can play a more effective role as part of a larger multilateral initiative, successive governments have often focused human rights efforts to their work within international organizations. Increasingly, however, Canada is turning to bilateralism in order to achieve key foreign policy objectives. High profile government trade missions, greater priority placed on the signing of free trade agreements, and a growing focus on economic and political summit meetings represent clear examples of Canada's efforts to enhance economic and political relations with many states.

As Canada pursues new trade deals and economic opportunities, however, legitimate concerns are being raised about where human rights fit into the foreign policy framework. After all, while Canada has been supportive of international efforts to set standards to which all nations should abide, attainment of these lofty objectives is left in the hands of individual governments.<sup>2</sup> Yet, Canada's commitment to the pursuit of human rights objectives as a key component of its bilateral relations has been anything but consistent. Most often, decisive action has only been taken in those cases where key economic or political relationships are

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<sup>1</sup> Cranford Pratt, "The Limited Place of Human Rights in Canadian Foreign Policy", in *Human Rights, Development and Foreign Policy: Canadian Perspectives*, Irving Brecher, ed. (Canada: The Institute for Research on Public Policy, 1989) p. 171.

<sup>2</sup> Robert Matthews and Cranford Pratt, "Introduction: Concepts and Instruments" in *Human Rights in Canadian Foreign Policy*, Robert O. Matthews and Cranford Pratt, eds. (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988), p. 13.



not deemed to be at risk.

In examining the relationship between human rights policies and Canadian bilateral initiatives, the objective of this analysis is two-fold. First, this chapter will trace the development of a human rights component in Canadian bilateral relations from a historical perspective. In doing so, this section will address certain constraints that have inhibited Canada from playing a more active role in the protection and promotion of fundamental rights and freedoms. This analysis will also examine, in the current context, how human rights issues fit into Canada's bilateral relations. Here, the focus will be on the two most prominent pillars of Canadian bilateralism, international development assistance and trade. While acknowledging that human rights concerns must be placed in a larger foreign policy framework in which compromises are, at times, inevitable, I contend that Canada does have the ability to promote human rights issues without jeopardizing other important policy objectives.

### **An Overview of Human Rights and Canadian Foreign Policy**

In order to explain Canada's historical one-track multilateral approach to human rights policy a number of key issues must be addressed. First, human rights concerns have often been muted for reasons of international security. Specifically, the Cold War struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union had the effect of constraining human rights initiatives in smaller, less powerful states.<sup>3</sup> Canada's policies in Central America during this period serve to illustrate the difficulties posed by the politics of the Cold War. In this case,

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<sup>3</sup> Kathleen E. Mahoney, "Human Rights and Canada's Foreign Policy" in *International Journal*, 47(3) 1992, p. 561.

"independent policy making was sacrificed for the sake of security and other interests of the superpowers."<sup>4</sup> For example, in spite of ongoing concerns over issues such as the mining of harbours in Nicaragua, and El Salvador's notorious death squads, Canada generally accepted the US administration's support of some of the world's most brutal and repressive leaders.<sup>5</sup> Strategic influences on human rights policy have declined somewhat with the end of the Cold War. Their role, however, in restricting human rights initiatives during this period should not be understated.

Second, international relations in the decades following the end of World War II were defined, to a great extent, by the principles of state sovereignty and non-intervention. Although Canada was willing to sign international human rights accords and play a more active role in the UN arena, it was reluctant to address any issues that would be seen as infringing upon the sovereignty of other nations. In 1968, for example, Mitchell Sharp, Secretary of State for External Affairs, defended Canada's policy of dealing only with the government-side during the Nigerian Civil War. When questioned, he asserted:

Canada's whole policy towards African and other newly emerging countries in recent years has been built on a spirit of cooperation rather than intervention.... We have been welcomed because our policy has been to assist Africans and not to tell them how to run their affairs.<sup>6</sup>

Similarly, Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, while on a visit to Southeast Asia, affirmed that

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<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 562.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 562.

<sup>6</sup> As quoted in Kim Richard Nossal, "Cabin'd, Cribb'd, Confin'd?: Canada's Interest in Human Rights", in *Human Rights in Canadian Foreign Policy*, p. 51.

he would not raise human rights concerns with Asian leaders. He stated "I don't visit other countries with the intention of telling them how they should run their own affairs, I don't have the authority to do so."<sup>7</sup> He further added that he had no intention of "trying to right any wrongs...no more than I would like any visitor to Canada to tell us how we should have dealt with the FLQ crisis."<sup>8</sup> This respect for state sovereignty, it would seem, has its roots in Canada's own sense of vulnerability on this subject. Subsequently, it has influenced Canada's willingness to pursue human rights concerns as a key component of bilateral relations.

Third, economic and commercial interests have historically factored heavily into human rights decisions. In a study published in 1984, for example, T.A. Keenleyside and Patricia Taylor, upon examining Canadian policy towards South Africa, Uganda, Argentina, Chile, and South Korea concluded that Canada was reluctant to engage in economic sanctions against nations with which it has growing commercial interests.<sup>9</sup> As Canada continues to seek out new trade and economic opportunities globally, this is an argument that will likely continue to gain in relevance.

By the end of the 1970s, however, a distinct policy shift had taken place, and human rights issues were beginning to figure more prominently in Canada's bilateral relations. This shift could be attributed to a number of events and trends which were taking place at the time. Specifically, Canadian policy makers were influenced by a growing interest in human

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<sup>7</sup> As quoted in Nossal, p. 52.

<sup>8</sup> As quoted in Nossal, p. 52.

<sup>9</sup> For a discussion of this analysis, please Nossal, p. 49.

rights issues within the Carter administration in the US. As well, Canada had recently served a two-year term on the Security Council. This term coincided with the Council's decision to invoke Chapter VII enforcement measures against South Africa and its repressive apartheid policies. Canada was, therefore, concerned that public pronouncements regarding state sovereignty would conflict with UN actions. Finally, Canada was responding to the considerable global attention being given to serious violations of human rights, not only in South Africa, but in countries such as Uganda and Cambodia.<sup>10</sup> Policy makers, and the Canadian public generally, were expressing an ongoing interest in addressing gross and systematic violations of human rights through a more active Canadian foreign policy.

One must be careful, however, not to overemphasize the effect this policy shift had on Canada's willingness to address human rights issues more forcefully. As recent history has shown, when Canada has taken bilateral actions, it is generally against those countries with whom economic or political relations are not substantial. According to Cranford Pratt, "even slight and peripheral economic gains were judged to be more important than a stronger human rights component of our foreign policy."<sup>11</sup> Despite public statements by successive governments underscoring that human rights will be a consideration in all of Canada's relationships, this principle has often been displaced by more immediate economic and political objectives.<sup>12</sup>

The most glaring example of this in recent history can be found in examining

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51.

<sup>11</sup> Pratt, p. 174.

<sup>12</sup> Kim Richard Nossal, "Cabin'd, Cribb'd, Confin'd? Canada's Interest in Human Rights", p. 47.

Canada's relationship with China, particularly in the aftermath of the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre. In the weeks following this event, Canada announced a series of decisive and wide-ranging measures, including bans on high level state visits, the cancellation of several cooperative programs and aid projects, and steps to provide refuge for pro-democracy Chinese students.<sup>13</sup> On the surface, it seemed as if Canada was taking concrete action against an important economic power. These measures, in the end, proved to be mainly symbolic in nature and fell well short of initial public expectations. Within months, for example, Canada's Export Development Corporation had agreed to finance a number of projects in China.<sup>14</sup> Jeremy Paltiel states:

The instinctive revulsion at the repression was tempered by an international policy consensus that the gates must not be allowed to shut and that China must not be sealed off behind the great wall.<sup>15</sup>

Rather than jeopardize important bilateral commercial relations with China over the question of human rights, the Canadian government (as well as most other Western administrations) adopted the view that forceful measures would harm long-term economic interests. Despite high levels of public criticism over the government's actions, human rights considerations, in this instance, were set aside in the larger foreign policy context.

In *Canada In the World*, the current government contends that it considers respect

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<sup>13</sup> Jeremy Paltiel, "Negotiating Human Rights with China" in *Democracy and Foreign Policy: Canada Among Nations 1995*, Maxwell Cameron and Maureen Appel Molot eds. (Ottawa: Carleton University Press Inc., 1995), p. 167.

<sup>14</sup> Paul Gecelovsky and T.A. Keenleyside, "Canada's International Human Rights Policy in Practice: Tiananmen Square" in *International Journal* 50(3) 1995, p. 567.

<sup>15</sup> Paltiel, p. 166.

for human rights to be a "crucial element in the development of stable, democratic and prosperous societies."<sup>16</sup> Yet, Canada's commitment to promoting human rights as a key element of bilateral policies has consistently fallen short of its statements of intention. Given Canada's lacklustre history in promoting human rights issues outside of multilateral forums, one is left with two key questions; where do human rights fit into the foreign policy process, and what can be done to ensure that Canada addresses human rights concerns more forcefully in its bilateral relations?

### **Finding a Niche: Placing Human Rights Firmly on the Agenda**

Policy makers argue that Canada's bilateral human rights efforts can be defined by the notion of principled pragmatism.<sup>17</sup> While correctly asserting that the tools available for action on human rights issues will vary from country to country, officials have come to the unfortunate conclusion that this precludes the development of a more consistent basis for action. The dichotomy between Canada's leadership role in enforcing sanctions on Nigeria in response to high profile killings of political dissidents, for example, is in sharp contrast to its unwillingness to take substantive action against countries such as China which continue to violate fundamental rights in a similar fashion. This is not to argue that because economic and political sanctions worked in Nigeria, they will also work in China. On the contrary, policy makers must contemplate a wide range of actions. Championing a foreign policy

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<sup>16</sup> Government of Canada, *Canada in the World* (Ottawa: the Government of Canada, 1995), p. 34.

<sup>17</sup> See Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, "Notes for an Address by the Honourable Lloyd Axworthy Minister of Foreign Affairs at McGill University - Human Rights and Canadian Foreign Policy: Principled Pragmatism", [http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/english/news/statem-1/97\\_state/\\_97\\_042e.htm](http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/english/news/statem-1/97_state/_97_042e.htm), accessed on 17/11/97.

based on coherence will not detract from the government's ability to be pragmatic in its responses. The concept of principled pragmatism, however, has been inadequate in determining - in any consistent fashion - when government action is required.

The formulation of a threshold point beyond which action must be taken is necessary for a number of reasons. First, it would address the tendency to push human rights considerations down the list of foreign policy priorities. Instead, if policy makers have in place a certain standard beyond which human rights actions in some form must be taken, such matters would have a much firmer foothold on the policy agenda. In addition, through the development of a more coherent position on human rights, and by demonstrating a willingness to take either punitive or positive actions in support of such rights, Canada will be in a better position to help countries make tangible improvements to their records over the long-term. Certainly, one must be cautious not to take this argument too far. Canada has neither the economic nor the political power to impose its will unilaterally. Moreover, many governments are not going to reform their ways and demonstrate a greater respect for human rights immediately. Canada, though, does have the ability to link concerns over human rights to other pressing bilateral issues. In doing so, officials can play a role in promoting longer term attitudinal change within a target state. Furthermore, if such initiatives coincide with enhanced efforts to build consensus among key economic and political allies - in both a bilateral and multilateral context - over the need to link human rights with other key policy objectives, then positive change may occur sooner rather than later.

### **Linking Human Rights with Developmental Assistance Policies**

A major component of Canadian bilateral relations is the disbursement of foreign aid. Canada's International Assistance envelope totals approximately \$2.5 billion annually.<sup>18</sup> Activities are being funded in 128 countries, with 70 per cent of country-to-country disbursements going to 28 nations.<sup>19</sup> While successive Canadian governments have played an active role in the area of development assistance, this field has raised an interesting dilemma for policy makers. Many of the world's worst violators of human rights are the leaders of developing countries.<sup>20</sup> There is a danger, then, that foreign aid dollars may contribute directly to a government's repressive policies against its own people.

In the last two decades, the issue of linking human rights and development assistance policies has been a matter of ongoing discussion. Marshall Conley, in 1983, asserted that Canada should "give priority support to those nations earnestly engaged in eradicating poverty and protecting human rights."<sup>21</sup> Moreover, in 1985, Robert Matthews and Cranford Pratt argued:

in cases where it can be clearly demonstrated that human rights are grossly and persistently violated, Canada should suspend or terminate all government-to

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<sup>18</sup> Marcus Gee, "World's Poor Overlooked as Foreign Aid Stays Low" *Globe and Mail*, 18 February, 1999, p. A14.

<sup>19</sup> Canada Parliament – Special Joint Committee Reviewing Canadian Foreign Policy, *Canada's Foreign Policy: Principles and Priorities for the Future - Report of the Special Joint Committee Reviewing Canadian Foreign Policy*, (Ottawa: Canada Communications Group, 1994), pp. 54-55.

<sup>20</sup> T.A. Keenleyside, "Development Assistance" in *Human Rights in Canadian Foreign Policy*, p. 187.

<sup>21</sup> As quoted in T.A. Keenleyside, "Canadian Aid and Human Rights: Forging a Link" in *Human Rights, Development and Foreign Policy: Canadian Perspectives*, p. 330.



-government assistance..."<sup>22</sup>

Canada's aid programme, after all, may represent the single most important dimension of its relations with a developing nation.<sup>23</sup> There is great potential, therefore, to link such programs with human rights in target countries.

Recognizing this fact, the Canadian government has worked in recent years to forge a stronger link between development and human rights. In the 1987 Report of the Standing Committee of External Affairs and International Trade, the Committee concluded that a key condition for true long-term development is respect for basic human rights.<sup>24</sup> The Committee went on to say:

Through cooperative programs of financial support, exchange, research and technical assistance, Canada should contribute to the long-term development of political, civil and cultural rights as it now contributes to long-term economic and social development through the aid program.<sup>25</sup>

Subsequently, the Canadian International Development Agency, in its 1987 report entitled *Sharing our Future: Canadian International Development Assistance*, addressed the need for stronger linkages between foreign aid and human rights. Among the most notable initiatives to emerge from this report included the establishment of special human rights

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<sup>22</sup> As quoted in T.A. Keenleyside, "Canadian Aid and Human Rights: Forging a Link" in *Human Rights, Development and Foreign Policy: Canadian Perspectives*, p. 331.

<sup>23</sup> Keenleyside, "Development Assistance", p. 187.

<sup>24</sup> Canada Parliament – Standing Committee on External Affairs and International Trade, *For Whose Benefit? Report of the Standing Committee on External Affairs and International Trade on Canada's Official Development Assistance Policies and Programs* (Ottawa: Department of Supply and Services, 1987), p. 23.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.

training programs for Canadian development officers, and a commitment to enhance levels of aid to those countries showing a marked improvement in their human rights record.<sup>26</sup>

This report also advocated a more flexible approach to addressing human rights issues through its development assistance policies. While recognizing the need to ensure that aid dollars were not used to assist repressive regimes, the government acknowledged that cutting aid off completely would, in the end, hurt those people in poor areas where help is most needed. Instead, this report concluded that, in cases where government-sponsored human rights abuses warranted the cancellation of bilateral assistance, these dollars should be funnelled through non-governmental and multilateral organizations working at the grassroots level.<sup>27</sup> In doing so, Canada can send a strong message to a recipient government that its human rights practices are not acceptable, while also ensuring that aid continues to reach those most in need. In some cases, after all, civil society and the private sector are in the best position to undertake tangible initiatives to improve the economic and social prospects of a country.

The current government reaffirmed this commitment to link foreign aid and human rights in its 1995 white paper. It is asserted in this document that "respect for human rights is essential, as are a healthy civil society and political systems that inspire confidence and trust."<sup>28</sup> Certainly, efforts to link human rights and foreign aid represent a significant step forward. There is evidence to suggest, however, that a sizeable gap continues to exist

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<sup>26</sup> Canadian International Development Agency, *Sharing Our Future: Canadian International Development Assistance* (Ottawa: Department of Supply and Services, 1987), p. 32.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31 .

between official government policy and the practical implementation of more formal linkages between aid and human rights. Canada's NGO community has expressed serious concerns over the degree of consistency in which these policies are being implemented.<sup>29</sup> They argue that the government has been extremely selective in determining whether or not to implement punitive measures, choosing to act only in instances where Canada has neither extensive commercial interests nor a significant aid program.

A key example of this policy shortcoming can be found by examining Canada's reaction to China's crackdown on pro-democracy supporters in 1989. In response to the government's handling of the demonstrations in Tiananmen Square, Canada postponed the signing of memoranda of understanding relating to five development assistance projects valued at approximately \$60 million.<sup>30</sup> Given both the growing levels of commercial interest in the country, and the fact that China was, at that time, Canada's sixth largest recipient of aid, this decision was indeed significant. The impact of these measures, however, were soon nullified. Within a year of the Tiananmen Square massacre all five projects had been approved. According to Earl Drake, one-time Canadian Ambassador to China, "Canada simply wanted to make a statement rather than substantively affect the bilateral development relationship."<sup>31</sup> Moreover, by 1990-91, Canadian bilateral aid to China had jumped by 106.5

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<sup>28</sup> Government of Canada, *Canada in the World*, (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 1995), p. 40.

<sup>29</sup> Canada Parliament – Special Joint Committee Reviewing Canadian Foreign Policy, *Canada's Foreign Policy: Principles and Priorities for the Future - Report of the Special Joint Committee Reviewing Canadian Foreign Policy*, p. 53.

<sup>30</sup> Gecelovsky and Keenleyside, p. 577.

<sup>31</sup> As quoted in Gecelovsky and Keenleyside, pp. 579-580.

per cent to \$72.7 million (in a year where total aid disbursements fell by 7.8 per cent), making it Canada's second largest recipient of development assistance dollars.<sup>32</sup> From this case, it would seem that when significant interests are at stake, government efforts to link foreign aid and human rights are not pursued in a forceful manner.

Yet the government had a number of tools at its disposal which, if applied, could have sent a strong message to China that such systematic abuse of core rights would not be tolerated. With respect to the suspension of the initial \$60 million, for example, this money could have been reallocated to either international agencies or NGOs focused on promoting human rights, human development and projects aimed at teaching respect for the rule of law and democratic institution building. Instead, the government merely reinstated this funding once it deemed that such action would not set off a negative, and politically damaging, response at home. In effect, this sent a message to China that beyond taking symbolic measures which, at worst may prove to be inconvenient, Canada had little interest in linking development assistance with human rights issues.

Aside from questions regarding Canada's commitment to linking development and human rights, there is a growing concern that the government simply does not have the capability to do so in an effective manner. The steady decline in Canada's development assistance budget in recent years will affect its ability to address human rights in recipient nations in a meaningful fashion. The Canadian government has drastically cut foreign aid in recent years. Its level of funding has now dropped to a thirty year low of 0.27 per cent of Gross National Product (GNP). This represents a twenty-eight per cent drop since 1991

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<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 579-580.

alone, and is far below Canada's stated target of 0.7 per cent of GNP.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, aid levels to the world's 48 least developed countries dropped by thirty three per cent between 1992-93 and 1996-97.<sup>34</sup> With the threat that Canada's contribution level will fall even further in the coming years, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 1998 called into question Canada's commitment and ability to meet its own stated responsibility in the area of foreign aid.<sup>35</sup>

There are signs that ongoing cuts to the aid budget have been halted. In the 1999 federal budget, it was announced that an additional \$237 million would be allocated for foreign aid during the new fiscal year and \$50 million for the following year.<sup>36</sup> The government has trumpeted this as proof of its intent to return to a commitment of growth in the aid budget. Yet, this action falls far short of what is required. Even with this two-year commitment, Canada's spending levels on aid will fall to 0.26 per cent of GNP by the year 2000<sup>37</sup>, leading one observer to lament "our rhetoric will start to ring hollow unless it is backed up by resources."<sup>38</sup> Canada's ability to affect positive changes on human rights

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<sup>33</sup> See for example Paul Knox, "Time For a Foreign Aid Review", *Globe and Mail*, 26 February, 1998, A8; also for a comprehensive analysis of the effect of declining budgets on Canadian aid policies see Tim Draimin and Brian Tomlinson, "Is There a Future for Canadian Aid in the 21st Century?" in *Canada Among Nations 1998: Leadership and Dialogue*, Fen Osler Hampson and Maureen Appel Molot, eds., (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 143-146.

<sup>34</sup> Draimin and Tomlinson, p. 154.

<sup>35</sup> Madelaine Drohan, "Canada's Foreign Aid Inadequate: OECD" *Globe and Mail*, 23 February, 1998, p. A8.

<sup>36</sup> Canadian International Development Agency, "1999 Federal Budget and its Impact on Canada's International Assistance Program", <http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/bud99-e.htm>, accessed on 26/02/99.

<sup>37</sup> See Marcus Gee, p. A14.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. A14.

matters, through its development assistance policies, will undoubtedly be reduced if real and significant growth in funding levels does not occur. After all, efforts to influence a nation's human rights policies, while simultaneously reducing the amount of foreign aid to that country, will unlikely lead to positive changes.

In order to ensure that linkages between human rights and aid are viable, Canada must work towards meeting its target of 0.7 per cent of GNP. Admittedly, this target is a long way from being achieved. In the interim, Canada should work towards achieving a real growth rate target. The North-South Institute, for example, has argued for a real annual growth target of 2.4 per cent each year.<sup>39</sup> Perhaps, real growth in the aid budget, however, should be linked directly to growth in the GNP, with stronger investments in years where growth is strong and more limited investments in years where growth is weaker. From a domestic political perspective, this might be a more prudent and defensible course of action for the government of the day.

The reality of substantial federal cuts to the aid budget as well as CIDA's operations in recent years has led to a growing scarcity of resources available to implement innovative human rights objectives. As CIDA strives to improve efficiency and respond to the challenges posed by this resource shortage, there has been an increase in political and institutional receptivity to ideas such as partnerships as a means of delivering programs more effectively.<sup>40</sup> CIDA must cultivate stronger relationships with the NGO community and its

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<sup>39</sup> The North South Institute, *Canada and the Developing World: Key Issues for Canada's Foreign Policy* (Ottawa: The North-South Institute, 1994), p. 28.

<sup>40</sup> Leslie A. Pal, *Beyond Policy Analysis: Public Issue Management in Turbulent Times* (Scarborough: International Thomson Publishing, 1997) p. 35.

private sector partners as a means of ensuring the implementation of a strong human rights component in its aid program.

In light of the above factors, the time has come for an open and comprehensive evaluation of Canada's aid policies. The last time such a review was conducted was in 1987. The international system, however, has changed dramatically since that time, and CIDA's ability to respond to new challenges has been questioned. During the 1994 hearings of the Special Joint Committee Reviewing Canadian Foreign Policy, many NGOs were highly critical of CIDA:

They found CIDA to be excessively bureaucratic and plodding; to be promoting structural adjustment policies that seemed to be hurting the poor; to be confusing development objectives with Canada's trade interests; and to be straying far from the stated objectives of the aid program.<sup>41</sup>

Levels of tied aid, for example, have remained unchanged since the mid-1980s despite estimates that this results in a 15 per cent over-pricing of goods and services.<sup>42</sup> This ongoing commitment to tied aid suggests that Canada's development assistance policies continue to focus on serving commercial interests and expanding trade and investment opportunities rather than addressing pressing problems such as poverty alleviation and respect for human rights.<sup>43</sup> Such an evaluation is necessary in order to refocus the CIDA mandate, to evaluate

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<sup>41</sup> Canada Parliament – Special Joint Committee Reviewing Canadian Foreign Policy, *Canada's Foreign Policy: Principles and Priorities for the Future - Report of the Special Joint Committee Reviewing Canadian Foreign Policy*, p. 47.

<sup>42</sup> Draimin and Tomlinson, p. 155.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 150-151.

its efforts to promote human rights and human development, and to ensure that CIDA is in a position to address new and difficult challenges in the field of international assistance.

### **Linking trade and human rights**

Canada is a trading nation. With annual exports approaching \$200 billion, it is clear that international trade is a vital component of government efforts to promote economic growth and job creation.<sup>44</sup> Moreover, globalization has opened up world-wide trade and investment opportunities at an unprecedented rate. Greater market access in emerging economies in Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe have the potential to bring positive dividends to Canada's domestic economy.

In light of these opportunities, the current government in its 1995 white paper stated that "the promotion of prosperity and employment is at the heart of the Government's agenda."<sup>45</sup> The importance of international trade has been further emphasized by regular Team Canada trade missions in which federal and provincial leaders join with Canadian companies on international tours in order to promote Canadian goods and services. This emphasis on trade has led one analyst to conclude that, "the senior bureaucracy, for obvious structural reasons, will regard as one of its primary obligations that it ensure the health of the economic system on which depends the prosperity of the economy and the revenues of the

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<sup>44</sup> Canada Parliament – Special Joint Committee Reviewing Canadian Foreign Policy, *Canada's Foreign Policy: Principles and Priorities for the Future - Report of the Special Joint Committee Reviewing Canadian Foreign Policy*, p. 29.

<sup>45</sup> Government of Canada, *Canada in the World*, p. 10.



state."<sup>46</sup> This foreign policy focus on trade and investment opportunities has had the effect of overshadowing human rights considerations on the policy agenda.

Canadian officials argue that the government is working to promote human rights through increased trade and enhanced economic ties with a particular nation. While conceding that trade itself does not promote democratization or a greater respect for fundamental rights, Minister Axworthy contends that "it creates a relationship, within which we can begin to speak about human rights."<sup>47</sup> Furthermore, as countries open their doors to more trade and investment, they come under increasing pressure to respect the rule of law.<sup>48</sup> This position is not without certain merits. After all, the closer the relationship between states, the more likely it is that a government will listen to criticisms regarding its human rights practices.<sup>49</sup> Some recent examples in Canadian foreign policy may serve to strengthen this argument. In Indonesia, the government has established a formal program of cooperation between the two nations' Human Rights Commissions. Canada is the first country to have developed links with this national body.<sup>50</sup> In India, Canada has provided \$1.6 million to assist the Indian Human Rights Commission to develop human rights education programs

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<sup>46</sup> Pratt, p. 175.

<sup>47</sup> University of Ottawa Human Rights Research and Education Centre, "Gordon Henderson Distinguished Lecture: The Honourable Lloyd Axworthy, Minister of Foreign Affairs - November 6, 1997", <http://www.uottawa.ca/~hrrec/conf/axwore.html>, accessed on 25/02/98.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> Livermore, p. 152.

<sup>50</sup> Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, "Notes for an Address by the Hon. Lloyd Axworthy, Minister of Foreign Affairs, at the Consultations with Non-Governmental Organizations in Preparation for the 53rd Session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights", [http://www.dfaitaeci.gc.ca/english/news/statem-1/97\\_state/97\\_007e.htm](http://www.dfaitaeci.gc.ca/english/news/statem-1/97_state/97_007e.htm), accessed on 05/02/98.

for schools, many of which are targeted towards educating young girls.<sup>51</sup> With respect to China, the two countries co-hosted a meeting on human rights and legal issues in March of 1998.<sup>52</sup> According to the Canadian government these initiatives demonstrate that Canada can make a positive difference on human rights matters by building stronger bilateral ties.

Despite these modest successes, however, there is still much evidence to suggest that human rights remain on the periphery of Canada's bilateral discussions with key economic partners. During a recent trade mission to China, for example, Prime Minister Chretien was adamant in discussions with the Canadian media that their hosts would not enjoy full integration into the world economy without first improving their respect for the rule of law.<sup>53</sup>

Yet, later, in comments to President Jiang Zemin, the Prime Minister stated "We do not come to China to impose ourselves or our institutions."<sup>54</sup> This statement would seem to suggest tacit support for the Chinese position that human rights issues belong in the sphere of a nation's internal affairs.<sup>55</sup> Despite Canada's tough talk on the need to promote fundamental rights and freedoms, when it has had a chance to bring this message forward, senior officials have remained reluctant to do so in any meaningful or comprehensive fashion.

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<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, "Notes for an Address by the Hon. Lloyd Axworthy Minister of Foreign Affairs at the Consultations with Non-Governmental Organizations in Preparation for the 54th Session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights - February 19, 1998", [http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/english/news/statements/98\\_state/98\\_011e.htm](http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/english/news/statements/98_state/98_011e.htm), accessed on 26/03/98.

<sup>53</sup> Paltiel, p. 179.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 179.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 179.

Another key example of economic interests superseding human rights concerns can be found in the 1994 signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). In defending this agreement from a human rights perspective, the Canadian government argued that:

...the best way to encourage political stability and democratic values in Mexico was through the consolidation of economic reforms which had been undertaken in earlier years, the promotion of further economic liberalization, and a greater integration into international markets.<sup>56</sup>

Recent internal developments in Mexico are demonstrating that economic liberalization has not led to stronger democratic values and respect for fundamental rights among members of the government elite. Documented cases of political killings, and the torture of suspected guerrilla supporters while in custody highlight the shortcomings of a government which continues to act with a great deal of impunity.<sup>57</sup> In addition, the increasing awareness of election fraud and corruption within government combined with a civil society which is demanding greater democratization, all point to high levels of instability and unrest that have not been quelled as a result of enhanced commercial and economic links.<sup>58</sup>

These cases suggest that despite Canadian efforts to improve trade and economic opportunities, little has been done to link human rights into the discussion. According to Ed Broadbent, former President of the International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development (ICHRDD), "democratic governments (including the Government of Canada)

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<sup>56</sup> Ricardo Grinspun et. al, "Economic Reforms and Political Democratization in Mexico: Reevaluating Basic Tenets of Canadian Foreign Policy" in *Democracy and Foreign Policy: Canada Among Nations 1995*, p. 212.

<sup>57</sup> Human Rights Watch, *World Report 1996* (United States of America: Human Rights Watch, 1995), p. 110.

nave become more preoccupied with conquering new markets than they have with defending human rights."<sup>59</sup> Rather than working to develop stronger ties in order to raise human rights issues, Canada seems reluctant to bring such concerns to the table for fear of upsetting the bilateral relationship.

Nowhere is this fact more evident than in Canada's membership within the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum. Founded in 1989, APEC's members represents fifty per cent of world trade, and their combined gross domestic product (GDP) of \$13 trillion (US) represents forty five percent of the total global GDP.<sup>60</sup> This forum is praised by its eighteen member economies as a valuable means through which enhanced economic liberalization can be achieved.<sup>61</sup> For Canada, it also represents a valuable opportunity to enhance bilateral relations with other member states. While APEC leaders use their annual meeting to focus on improving regional economic growth, they systematically refuse to include the issue of human rights in their deliberations, arguing instead that this matter falls outside of the forum's mandate.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Grinspun et. al, p. 212.

<sup>59</sup> Corinne McDonald and Gerald J. Schmitz, *Human Rights, Global Markets: Some Issues and Challenges for Canadian Foreign Policy* (Ottawa: Library of Parliament Research Branch, 1996), p. 3.

<sup>60</sup> APEC is an association of economies and not nations in order to allow for representatives from China and Taiwan to sit at the same table. APEC's 18 members are: Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Chile, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Phillippines, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, and USA.

<sup>61</sup> See for example Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, "APEC Leaders Declaration: Connecting the APEC Community - November 25, 1997", <http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/~apec/english/leader-e.htm>, accessed on 10/04/98.

<sup>62</sup> See for example International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development "Human Rights: APEC's Missing Agenda", <http://www.ichrdd.ca/asiaE/97/apecSummitE.html>, accessed on 10/04/98.

An examination of the APEC membership list reveals two striking features. Most of the Asian nations represented within this organization are among the fastest growing economies in the world. Furthermore, on this list, one will find some of the world's most vocal opponents of universal human rights. For nations such as Canada, this represents a difficult dichotomy. Leaders are caught between publics that are appalled by abusive human rights records and business communities that are enthralled by the new economic opportunities these emerging markets offer.<sup>63</sup>

At present, substantial new bilateral trade and investment opportunities have had the effect of muting Canada's criticisms of the human rights records of other forum members. In justifying the focus on economic growth, policy makers have argued that by participating in APEC, government leaders can practice 'quiet diplomacy' and 'constructive engagement' in order to promote human rights issues. Political leaders, therefore, argue that they can accomplish much more by raising human rights concerns privately and informally rather than embarrassing fellow APEC members through public condemnation of repressive practices. There is little evidence to suggest, however, that trade and investment is paving the way for democracy in the most repressive APEC nations. In fact, such forums may exert "...a tangible influence on the ability of countries like Canada...to maintain a consistently critical human rights dimension in their foreign policy."<sup>64</sup> The relationships that are formed between heads of state within the "clubbish dynamic established at the annual meetings of APEC

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<sup>63</sup> see for example Human Rights Watch, "Clinton Administration's Policy of 'Constructive Engagement' with China Rings Hollow", <http://www.hrw.org/campaigns/chinaed.html>, accessed on 25/02/98.

<sup>64</sup> International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development, "Human Rights: APEC's Missing Agenda"

leaders"<sup>65</sup> has undoubtedly dampened any incentive to push for real improvements in the human rights records of key trading partners. Rather than insisting that human rights issues be included on the formal agenda, leaders such as US President Bill Clinton and Prime Minister Jean Chretien have opted for friendly and informal bilateral 'fireside chats' to discuss these issues.<sup>66</sup> Given the lack of success these tactics have had to-date, one is left with little sense that such informal discussions are either substantive or valuable in the promotion and protection of human rights.

Yet by dismissing this topic at its annual meetings, APEC leaders are not only ignoring a key social issue, but are ultimately restricting their own ability to ensure long-term economic stability. The ongoing Asian economic crisis serves as ample proof of the fact that a single-minded focus on economic growth will not necessarily lead to the development of stable national economies. According to one human rights organization:

It became clear that freedoms of expression and association, far from the impediments to order that Asian leaders decry, were essential to producing responsive governments that would safeguard the well-being of Asian people.<sup>67</sup>

In fact, the unaccountable and undemocratic nature of government decisions in certain Asian countries served to exacerbate this financial downturn. In Indonesia, the economic crisis was driven to a great extent by high levels of government corruption and nepotism. Similarly,

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<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> Heribert Adam, "The Kind of People Canada Does Business With", *Globe and Mail*, 01 December, 1997, p. A21.

<sup>67</sup> Human Rights Watch, "World Report 1998", <http://www.hrw.org/research/worldreport.html>, accessed on 19/01/98.

the Malaysian government worsened its own economic outlook by laying the blame for this severe downturn squarely on the shoulders of foreign currency speculators. This action merely increased uncertainty among international corporations about Malaysia's political and economic stability.<sup>68</sup> In each of these cases, the financial crisis was worsened by the actions of governments that see little need to promote accountable decision-making, and demonstrate little regard for the rights of its people.

Although it is clear that a strong connection exists between human rights and economic stability, the great difficulty lies in linking these two issues in a substantive and meaningful fashion. For an organization such as APEC, which relies on a spirit of cooperation and consensus in order to achieve its goals, raising human rights issues becomes especially problematic. After all,

the issue of human rights, by definition breeds confrontation. Raising the issue touches on the very foundations of a regime, on its sources and exercise of power, on its links to its citizens or subjects<sup>69</sup>

APEC members must work to link fundamental rights and economic opportunity more closely in their bilateral discussions and annual meetings. Without giving substantial formal consideration to human rights issues, the organization will continue to fall short of its stated goal of enhancing regional prosperity and stability through sustainable growth.

In defence of its aggressive pursuit of trade and investment opportunities, Canadian

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<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> Tom J. Farer, "The United Nations and Human Rights: More Than a Whimper" in *Human Rights in the World Community*, p. 205.

officials assert that the international community cannot isolate important trading partners on the basis of poor human rights records. Certainly, harsh actions such as the imposition of economic sanctions or the cutting off of trade ties may neither be feasible nor constructive in all but the most extreme cases. That is not to say, however, that economic and political pressure should not be exerted. Instead, using the example of APEC, leaders from democratic nations such as Canada, the US, Japan and Australia must recall that they too represent a significant proportion of APEC's wealth and market opportunity. The long-term success of Asian economies, after all, will depend on a high level of access to international markets.<sup>70</sup> Canada, therefore, should work with democratic members of this forum in order to use such political and economic leverage in a positive fashion to push for improvements in the area of human rights.

There is little question that building consensus among members to take forceful actions in the name of human rights will be difficult to achieve. It is here that Canada's focus on the principle of soft power diplomacy will be a key to any future success. Bilateral human rights dialogue cannot just take place with perpetrators of rights violations, but consensus building must also take place with other like-minded nations. Unless agreements can be reached over the need to develop common responses to a government's poor human rights record, then it is unlikely that meaningful improvements will be achieved. There is some reason to believe that building consensus around this issue is possible. US Vice-President Al Gore's willingness to condemn the human rights record of the host Malaysian government

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<sup>70</sup> Miro Cernetig, "Protests, Politics and Guanxi Spice Up Huge APEC Summit", *Globe and Mail*, 18 November, 1997, p. A4.



at the 1998 APEC summit may be an indication that interest in human rights among key political allies is becoming stronger. As Canada continues to pursue the expansion of NAFTA and free and open investment within APEC, it is imperative that such activities also include efforts to build consensus around the need to protect and promote human rights.

One of the most popular punitive measures in the arsenal of states in the post-Cold War period has been the use of economic sanctions. Many nations, including Canada, have used the curtailment of trade and development activity as a means of signalling strong disapproval of undesirable policies.<sup>71</sup> Such actions may be an important tool in order to persuade perpetrators of gross and systematic violations of human rights to change their ways.<sup>72</sup> The value of this approach to addressing human rights issues, however, is not universally accepted. Rather than affecting the stated targets, the imposition of economic sanctions may lead to further hardships for innocent civilians. Furthermore, even when looking at successful cases, such as Canada's leadership role in the imposition of sanctions against South Africa, it is difficult to assess the effectiveness of this course of action. Although sanctions certainly sent an important message to South African leaders that their discriminatory policies were unacceptable, sanctions were certainly not the sole determining factor in eliminating the apartheid system.<sup>73</sup>

The debate over whether or not to impose sanctions as a means of addressing human rights violations, if anything, serves to exacerbate the inconsistencies in Canadian human

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<sup>71</sup> Michel Rossignol, *Sanctions: The Economic Weapon in the New World Order* (Ottawa: Library of Parliament Research Branch, 1993), p. 16.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19 .

rights policy. Policy makers, for instance, may express outrage and impose sanctions in response to certain situations, yet explain away other comparable situations under the guise of practicing constructive engagement and quiet diplomacy.<sup>74</sup> In the post-Cold War era Canada has imposed sanctions against a number of countries, including Iraq, Libya, Serbia, Montenegro, Haiti, Liberia, Nigeria and Angola.<sup>75</sup> Certainly, in all of these cases, concerns over serious violations of human rights were a factor in the decision to take action. What is also apparent, however, is that Canada does not have significant economic interests with any of the countries on this list. As this analysis has asserted, in those instances where key economic interests have been at stake, decisive action (whether in the form of sanctions or other means) has not been forthcoming.

For a country such as Canada, which does not have sufficient political and economic power to impose unilateral punitive action, other tools must be relied upon to promote respect for human rights. Canada does have the capacity to introduce positive trade and development measures in recognition of human rights improvements within specific countries. With respect to trade relations with lesser developed nations, Canada currently imposes an average tariff of ten per cent on industrialized imports.<sup>76</sup> If Canada is to play a positive role in linking human rights more closely with economic development, then the time

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<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>74</sup> Kim Richard Nossal, *Rain Dancing: Sanctions in Canadian and Australian Foreign Policy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press Inc., 1994), p. 15.

<sup>75</sup> Rossignol, p. 16 .

<sup>76</sup> Andrew Clark and Maureen O'Neill, "Canada and International Development: New Agendas" in *A New World Order? Canada Among Nations 1992-93*, Fen Osler Hampson and Christopher J. Maule eds. (Ottawa: Carleton University Press Inc., 1992), pp. 231-232.

has come for the government to loosen its overly protectionist import tariffs to ensure that developing nations can benefit from improved market access. For example, Canada places undue restrictions on clothing imports from Bangladesh. Yet Bangladesh imports represent well below one percent of the Canadian market. Lifting such restrictions unilaterally would, therefore, have a minimal impact upon Canada. Yet, for Bangladesh, this action would result in a net gain of \$370 million annually, nearly triple Canada's government-to-government aid program to this nation.<sup>77</sup> A minor loosening of trade barriers, therefore, would have a positive impact for lesser developed nations seeking new market opportunities. There is also great potential to link enhanced trade opportunities with improvements in a state's human rights performance. Attention should be given to making tariff reductions and aid allocations for specific countries commensurate with positive steps to improve their human rights record. In the case of Bangladesh, a nation with a poor human rights record, the government recently signed a series of internationally recognized agreements, including the Convention Against Torture. Whether or not the government is willing to abide by these international instruments is yet to be seen. Its decision to sign on to international conventions, however, should be viewed as a positive step forward. Liberalizing trade with lesser developed nations who are making a genuine effort to improve their human rights situation may provide significant incentive for further progress.

Finally, growing attention has been given in recent years to the issue of corporate responsibility. In Canada, a group of companies and associations with foreign operations

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<sup>77</sup> North-South Institute, p. 36.

recently drafted a voluntary code of international business practices and ethics.<sup>78</sup> Corporate initiatives such as this should be encouraged. Efforts by Canadian companies to protect human rights in their own international operations can have a direct and positive impact on the lives of their employees. This, in turn, may allow business operations to take place in a more stable social and economic climate. It is important to recognize, however, that such codes are not a panacea.<sup>79</sup> There are real concerns, for example, that a focus on voluntary corporate measures will take pressure off governments to address human rights issues in a more fundamental manner. Moreover, critics have argued that corporations often use these codes more as a public relations tool than a document to invoke real and lasting improvements in human rights.<sup>80</sup> In order to ensure the effectiveness of such codes, businesses should agree to independent examinations of their human rights practices.<sup>81</sup> Although these codes can represent an important step forward in protecting fundamental rights, such activities must work in conjunction with, rather than in place of, government efforts to address human rights concerns.

## Conclusion

Undoubtedly, many critics will argue that Canada on its own cannot affect real

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<sup>78</sup> Jeff Sallot, "Ottawa Takes Middle Road on Ethics" *Globe and Mail*, 06 September, 1997, B7.

<sup>79</sup> International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development, "Commerce with a Conscience?", <http://www.ichrdd.ca/PublicationsE/consE.html>, accessed on 19/01/98.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>81</sup> International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development, "Globalization, Trade and Human Rights: The Canadian Business Perspective", <http://www.ichrdd.ca/PublicationsE/reposum.html>, accessed on 19/01/98.

change on human rights issues. Admittedly, Canada often lacks both the economic and political leverage necessary to pressure a country unilaterally into changing its human rights practices overnight. This does not mean that Canada can simply walk away from addressing these issues. The development of a stronger global human rights culture will take time. The relationships Canada builds through trade and development assistance can be helpful in promoting and protecting human rights if such concerns are linked more closely with key economic and political matters. In pursuing closer ties with nations that have, to date, demonstrated a lack of commitment to human rights promotion, Canada must ensure that such linkages are in place, and that human rights objectives are firmly on the policy agenda.

In terms of its bilateral relations Canada has often failed to live up to this obligation. Instead, human rights considerations are overshadowed by other pressing foreign policy goals. The Canadian government continues to speak of the linkages which exist between a respect for human rights and economic and political security. In practice, however, its efforts have focussed on the latter, while giving only perfunctory attention to issues of fundamental rights and freedoms. Unless the Canadian government exhibits a greater level of political will and invests an appropriate level of resources to address human rights concerns in a consistent and substantive manner, this is a trend that is unlikely to change.

## **Chapter Five Establishing a Dynamic Human Rights Agenda**

### **Developing New Standards for Human Rights Action**

Canada, and the international community generally, is facing many key challenges in the realm of human rights protection. In light of this fact, critics of this analysis may conclude that the objective of developing a consistent and coherent human rights policy is not realistic, and that, in the future, human rights protection will continue to be an ad hoc and piecemeal exercise. The historical and contemporary literature on Canadian foreign policy and human rights seems to reaffirm this. Canada, while concerned with human rights in principle, often gives such matters only perfunctory attention when other key interests are at stake. Far from becoming a threshold issue, and a consideration in all of Canada's foreign relations, human rights considerations often fall victim to realist notions of a foreign policy agenda based on the promotion of national interests. This has resulted in a continued adherence to a case-by-case approach to the implementation of human rights initiatives. Without a commitment by policy makers to develop a human rights policy based on consistency, and backed by a demonstrated willingness to take action in order to protect core rights, Canada, and the international community at large, will experience little success in efforts to move beyond standard setting and into the realm of implementation. In a world that has become increasingly interdependent, and where stable and predictable interactions between states will more often depend on a respect for human rights, this is an issue that policy makers must address.

This analysis has identified a number of areas where the principles of consistency and coherence are beginning to take root, albeit slowly, in Canadian human rights policy. Although one must be careful not to overstate this argument, there is, nevertheless, some room for optimism. Canada's promotion of the concept of human security, and its support of humanitarian intervention and peacebuilding, for example, will require a substantial shift in the way in which the international community addresses threats to human rights. For the UN to be an effective organization in protecting human rights, it must adopt an approach to human security which includes the establishment of firm guidelines and more consistent procedures in order to determine when and where Chapter VII actions are warranted. In addition, Canada's support for the establishment of an effective and independent International Criminal Court is an important step forward. Through such a body, international laws will be enforced in a more consistent fashion than is presently the case. It is a positive sign that the international community is anxious to bring human rights violators to justice. This body will also send a strong message that neither individuals nor governments can act with impunity.

In a bilateral context, however, there has been less room for optimism. Although Canada has taken an important step forward by linking development assistance policies with human rights, the implementation of this policy has left a great deal to be desired. Human rights concerns, rather than acting as a common thread through all of Canada's development policies and projects, often receive little more than symbolic attention when important economic and political objectives are at stake. Furthermore, Canada has made little effort to establish stronger linkages between human rights and trade. Yet, for

policy makers to address human rights concerns in a comprehensive fashion, these issues must be linked with other key elements of Canada's bilateral relationships. After all, trade agreements are already utilized to control the movement of hazardous waste, reduce levels of chlorofluorocarbons, and protect intellectual property. There is no reason that such linkages should not also be extended to human rights.<sup>1</sup> Without a commitment to link human rights concerns in a meaningful fashion to those components of the bilateral relationship which are important to the target state, however, one can expect little to change in the realm of rights protection and promotion.

It is worth noting that promoting consistency and coherence as a policy objective does not represent a radical departure in terms of foreign policy decision-making. A key goal for policy makers has always been to work towards more predictable and orderly interactions between states. The establishment, for example, of multilateral and bilateral trade agreements and regimes are nothing more than an attempt to codify a set of rules and norms in order to guide economic activities between countries. Within these agreements are provisions to allow nations to respond to situations in which trade rules have been violated by another government. Retaliatory measures may encompass one or more of a range of initiatives including the imposition of tariffs, the curtailment of trade in certain sectors, and the appeal to institutionalized bodies such as dispute resolution panels for an impartial ruling. In short, if a trading partner in a multilateral or bilateral context takes actions that are considered to be unacceptable, then certain rules and procedures are in place to allow a government to address this matter.<sup>2</sup> If this is true in

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<sup>1</sup> David Gillies, *Between Principle and Practice: Human Rights in North South Relations* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996) p. 269.



the realm of trade and investment, why should it not also be the case in addressing human rights violations? After all, the international standards and agreements are already in place. The challenge for Canada, and indeed the international community generally, is to respond in a meaningful fashion when these standards are either under serious threat or are being violated in a systematic fashion.

### **Establishing a Threshold Point for Human Rights Initiatives**

This analysis has asserted that Canada has a responsibility to act when fundamental core rights (freedom from extrajudicial killing, freedom from torture, freedom from hunger and freedom from discrimination) are under threat or are being violated. Critics may assert, quite rightly, that a focus on core rights represents a 'lowest common denominator' approach to human rights protection. After all, these identified rights represent "a minimal level of consensus in a highly politicized field."<sup>3</sup> Yet, recognizing that nations have neither the resources nor the inclination to intercede in all instances of reported human rights violations, the need to prioritize certain core rights is necessary in order to develop common standards for action. In light of ongoing arguments that human rights issues must be addressed in a culturally sensitive manner, or that certain human rights listed in the UDHR are open to cultural interpretation, these core rights transcend such scrutiny. Quite simply, there can be no cultural misinterpretation when such rights are violated.

The establishment of a minimum standard in which human rights initiatives should be undertaken is not a revolutionary idea. A review of recent public statements

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<sup>2</sup> Both the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the World Trade Organization (WTO) contain standardized dispute resolution procedures in order to address trade disputes.

by Minister Axworthy in support of the protection of innocent victims of conflict would suggest that Canada, at least in principle, already supports this position. Yet, the inconsistent manner in which international efforts to prevent humanitarian crises have been implemented reinforces the fact that the establishment of such a standard is far from being achieved. Furthermore, from a bilateral perspective, Canada's case-by-case approach to addressing human rights matters will continue to undermine its ability to develop a common threshold point in order to protect core rights. Policy makers tend to reserve tough action in response to human rights concerns for those nations with which it has few economic or political ties. Conversely, even in those cases where a clear majority of the Canadian public urges government leaders to take decisive action against important trading partners, government responses have proven to be mainly symbolic in nature. In the case of China, for example, "Canada's public silence about human rights violations is interpreted by Chinese government officials as recognition that they were justified in crushing the democratic opposition in 1989."<sup>4</sup> Government officials continue to argue that developing a human rights policy based on consistency will hinder the government's ability to respond to each situation in a flexible manner. Without a clear standard in place, human rights concerns, far from becoming a threshold issue, will all-too-often be relegated to the periphery of the foreign policy agenda.

In developing a point beyond which human rights initiatives should be taken, however, one must be careful not to succumb to an all or nothing approach. In other words, Canada, as a good international actor, does not have to wait until evidence exists that gross and systematic violations of core rights are taking place on a large scale. The

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<sup>3</sup> Gillies, p. 37.

examples of Somalia, Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia all demonstrate that, in such cases, action may come too late to protect, not just the rights, but the lives of the innocent. Indeed, beyond supporting Chapter VII enforcement measures in order to deal with real and immediate humanitarian crises, Canada has at its disposal a wide range of instruments that can be used depending on the severity and frequency of rights violations.

### **Evaluation and Assessment Capability: A Key to Human Rights Protection**

In order to determine what, if any, human rights actions are required, it is essential that Canada has in place the ability to evaluate and assess human rights conditions in other states in a timely and effective manner. Critics of the argument that Canada should play a more active role in rights protection will no doubt contend that taking such action is difficult to do on a consistent basis because information is often patchy and unreliable.<sup>5</sup> Certainly, a historical review of interstate relations will confer a certain amount of validity to this argument. Diplomatic circles, for example, do not include the oppressed, leaving foreign representatives somewhat removed from those who are suffering as a result of human rights violations. Furthermore, organizations promoting human rights within a state with a poor rights record are often deemed to be subversive. Foreign diplomats have historically expressed a reluctance to develop close ties with such groups for fear of upsetting state-to-state relations.<sup>6</sup> At the multilateral

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<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 276.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 47.

<sup>6</sup> Robert O. Matthews and Cranford Pratt, "Introduction: Concepts and Instruments" in *Human Rights in Canadian Foreign Policy*, Robert O. Matthews and Cranford Pratt, eds. (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988) p. 19.

level, when a country submits an assessment of its own human rights record to bodies such as the UN Human Rights Commission, it is unlikely to admit to systematic violations of core rights. Even in cases where such activity is reported, UN efforts to monitor human rights have often been restricted by governments that are selective in their cooperation and careful to ensure that the worst violations remain well hidden from UN personnel and international human rights monitors.

Despite these realities, there is also much evidence to suggest that the information gathering and evaluative capacity of the international community has never been stronger. In addition to the UN, many states compile information regarding the human rights records of other nations. The development and distribution, for example, of country specific reports, such as those published by the US State Department, are important in providing a comprehensive overview of the civil and political rights situations in a broad range of countries. The authors of the US report in their efforts to provide comprehensive coverage to human rights issues are now steering away from reliance on traditional government and diplomatic channels. Instead, there is a greater focus on developing stronger links with human rights organizations and local media as a means of providing a more accurate picture of a country's record.<sup>7</sup>

A key to the development of a stronger assessment capability has been the work of international human rights NGOs. These organizations have shown themselves to be a vital and reliable source for human rights assessments, and the information they provide is used by UN agencies and governments alike. Unlike governments, NGOs

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<sup>7</sup> This assertion is based on personal observation during a six month work placement I have completed with the Bangladesh Institute of Human Rights in Dhaka, Bangladesh. At this time I held a number of discussions with a U.S. Human Rights Officer.

work at the grassroots level and, thus, usually have closer relationships with domestic human rights organizations, and with those who are victims of rights violations.<sup>8</sup> Recognizing both the significance of the work being done by such NGOs, and the value of developing country specific reports on human rights, Canada has recently taken an important step forward in the areas of assessment and evaluation. In partnership with Human Rights Internet, a Canadian-based international human rights NGO, a global human rights report based on UN sources has been developed and published on-line.<sup>9</sup> This report will be an important tool in assessing and evaluating the human rights records of other states. It is a positive sign that Canada is committed to enhancing its own capacity to assess and evaluate human rights records of other nations.

Reliable information, however, is only part of the equation. Canada must also develop a clear and consistent approach to assessing the rights situations in other nations. David Gillies, in his book *Between Principle and Practice: Human Rights and North-South Relations*, advocates a classification system whereby states are slotted into one of five human rights categories; protected, improving, satisfactory, worsening and negative. Table 5.1 provides a more detailed accounting of this classification system, and the general characteristics of states which fit into each of the five categories. Classifying states under clear headings, of course, will not be possible in all cases. Many complex factors may affect a country's ability to address its human rights situation, and states will often display characteristics that fit more than one category.

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<sup>8</sup> Matthews and Pratt, p. 19.

<sup>9</sup> Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, "Notes for An Address by the Hon. Lloyd Axworthy Minister of Foreign Affairs to the NGO Global Forum on the Five Year Review of the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights - Ottawa, June 23, 1998", <http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/english/>

**Table 5.1 An Index for Evaluating National Human Rights Performance**

<u>Human Rights</u>	<u>Society/Polity</u>	<u>Regime Type</u>
<b><i>PROTECTED</i></b> Core rights protected Formal equality Rule of law	Autonomous civil society Multipartism Regular elections Civilian control of army Relatively free press	Pluralistic democracy Social democracy
<b><i>IMPROVING</i></b> Core rights Civil/political rights restored Rule of law	Emerging civil society Multipartism Regular elections Civilian control of army	Emerging democracy
<b><i>SATISFACTORY</i></b> Core rights at risk Growing discrimination Civil/political rights suppressed	Judiciary possibly not independent Single party or regulated parties Controlled press and interest groups	Quasi democracy Military rule
<b><i>WORSENING</i></b> Core rights at risk Growing discrimination Civil/political rights suppressed	Rule of law eroding or emergency rule Internal violence or ethnic conflict Economic malaise? Army in politics? Press censorship	Declining democracy One party control Military Façade democracy
<b><i>NEGATIVE</i></b> Systematic abuse of core rights Genocide Ethnocide Food withheld Civil/political rights suppressed	Civil society weak or controlled Routine state terror Army in politics	Military Quasi democracy

(source: David Gillies, *Between Principles and Practice: Human Rights in North-South Relations* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), p. 40.)

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news/statements/98\_state/98\_047e.htm, accessed on 15/01/99; The report *For the Record*, can be found at Human Rights Internet, <http://www.hri.ca>, accessed on 15/01/99.

Policy makers will no doubt argue that the reliance on such a classification system will restrict Canada's ability to respond to situations in a flexible manner. Human rights violations, after all, may arise as a result of unique situations that cannot be categorized through the use of a specific formula.<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, the development of such a human rights index would prove to be a valuable tool for a number of reasons. First, it provides policy makers with a consistent basis from which to gauge the year-to-year changes in the records of other governments. The development of an index implies that the criteria for judging the human rights performance of other states will remain constant, thereby allowing for a more accurate portrayal of improvements or shortcomings in the field of human rights. Secondly, and perhaps most importantly, it allows states to evaluate whether or not actions taken in the name of human rights protection and promotion are having the desired impact. It should be noted that in all but the worst cases where immediate and perhaps forceful action is required, it will be difficult to measure progress in the short-term. Over a longer period, though, policy makers through the use of consistent criteria for evaluation can determine what effects, if any, their bilateral or multilateral efforts are having on the rights record of a target state. From this, governments can then determine an appropriate course for future action.

### **From Evaluation to Action**

This analysis has asserted that for human rights initiatives to be effective, a number of important principles and priorities require attention. First, stronger linkages must be established between human rights and other key components of the foreign

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46.

policy agenda. Governments must be made aware that disregard for core human rights will ultimately result in disruptions in key components of relations with Canada. Although this alone may not result in an overnight change in policy and a renewed commitment to human rights, it does send a strong message to a target state that certain actions are unacceptable and will be treated as such. Furthermore, for a country such as Canada, which does not have the economic or political might to rely solely upon unilateral and punitive measures, other more positive action should also be considered. As this analysis has asserted, Canada can implement valuable measures to liberalize trade and development assistance policies with those countries that have shown genuine efforts to improve their human rights record. It is here, perhaps, that Canadian initiatives can have a lasting impact, particularly with lesser developed nations anxious to expand their own international market opportunities.

Future human rights initiatives will also depend on the ability of nations to build consensus on key issues both in a multilateral and bilateral context. It is here that Canada can play a leadership role on the international stage. Canada has always prided itself on its middle power status. Its current focus on the principle of soft power diplomacy merely reinforces this belief that agreements reached through cooperation and consensus are much more desirable than those which rely upon coercive actions. Canada's leadership role in building international consensus during the campaign to ban anti-personnel land mines certainly serves as an example of what can be achieved through a combination of soft power diplomacy and a will, on the part of the international community, to act. That is not to say, of course, that consensus building will always be a successful tool in the field of human rights. Canada's efforts to achieve



broad agreement over the need for a more activist and interventionist UN, for example, will be much more difficult to achieve. In a bilateral context, consensus building should not merely be restricted to promoting stronger consideration for human rights within states with poor rights records. Indeed, a key to human rights protection will rest on the ability of like-minded nations to come together to develop coherent bilateral and multilateral policy responses to address human rights concerns. Such objectives, however, must be viewed in a long-term context. Attitudinal change, leading to the potential for wider international cooperation, is a gradual process. It will require patience and perseverance on the part of Canada and other like-minded nations.

Genuine efforts to place human rights firmly on the foreign policy agenda will also require a greater commitment of both finances and resources. Given the staunch competition for scarce government dollars, and a Canadian public that is focused more on issues such as improved health care spending and a desire for tax cuts, investing substantial amounts of additional resources into international human rights protection may not seem to be an expedient alternative for government leaders. Yet, there is some room for optimism. The current government has been successful in its efforts to balance the nation's finances and now boasts a healthy annual year-end surplus. Moreover, in its most recent budget, policy makers took moderate steps toward addressing the deficiencies in Canada's international assistance capabilities. It is important to recognize that key domestic spending priorities will more often than not take precedence. It is still vital, however, for the federal government to commit to making substantive strategic investments in the name of human rights. This includes focusing on areas such as development assistance, peacebuilding, and multilateral humanitarian efforts during

crisis situations. In addition, Canada must back up its political support for international institutions such as the UN and the International Criminal Court with an enhanced commitment of adequate and consistent financial and resource assistance. Unless such international organizations are placed on solid financial ground their long-term effectiveness will continue to be questioned.

Perhaps the key to the development of a coherent and consistent human rights policy is the need for leadership and long-term vision from the highest levels of government. Government leaders have long talked of the need for effective multilateral and bilateral measures to protect and promote human rights. In principle, there is widespread agreement that repression and systematic violations of human rights in one country will have a negative impact upon other states. In practice, however, policy makers have come up well short of their statements of collective good will. Instead, bound by the parameters of state sovereignty, fearful of harming key economic and political interests, and arguing that Canada alone does not have the influence to solve the human rights problems of the world, government decisions to act in defence of fundamental rights have been made on an ad hoc and inconsistent basis. This, in turn, has led to ineffective policy responses to key human rights issues.

Policy makers must not allow themselves to become constrained by realist or statist perspectives of international affairs in which initiatives aimed at promoting human rights in other countries are deemed to be either an infringement upon state sovereignty or not in the national interest. Quite simply, the protection and promotion of such rights, both within Canada and across borders, is in Canada's interest. The world has changed dramatically since the end of the Cold War, and a stable new world order

will rely upon cooperation and consensus-building, and not power politics, more than ever before. Yet this era continues to be marked by some of the worst violations of human rights in modern history. To date, the international community's response to such serious violations has been disappointing. It will take vision and commitment to develop a consistent basis for action by countries such as Canada in order to protect and promote human rights and ensure that positive change occurs over the long-term.

### **Prospects for the Future**

There will be those who argue that the assertions put forward in this analysis are too idealistic and, therefore, unachievable. Yet, recommendations that focus on the need for consistency in human rights policies are certainly not new in academic circles. Policy makers, however, fearful of what such decisions may mean in terms of other key foreign policy objectives, continue to demonstrate a great deal of reluctance to address human rights issues in a more coherent fashion. Without question, even if greater levels of consistency and coherence can be achieved, human rights policies will have to be balanced against other pressing foreign policy objectives. To-date, the steps taken in both a bilateral and multilateral context have not been sufficient in addressing human rights abuse, or in ensuring that human rights concerns become a key determinant in Canadian foreign policy. Under the guise of principled pragmatism, human rights issues continue to remain on the foreign policy periphery, despite government assertions to the contrary.

One must keep in mind, though, that the development of a human rights policy based on consistency and coherence will not occur overnight. After all, it has taken the

international community fifty years to reach a point where the focus on standard setting is being replaced by greater emphasis on the implementation of these goals. Canada has, in recent years, taken some modest steps forward which suggests a growing interest and concern regarding human rights issues. The key, however, will be to improve and expand upon these initiatives over the longer term. The implementation of effective human rights policies, based on the principles of coherence and consistency, is an objective that cannot necessarily be measured in months or even years, but one which will evolve over decades and perhaps generations.

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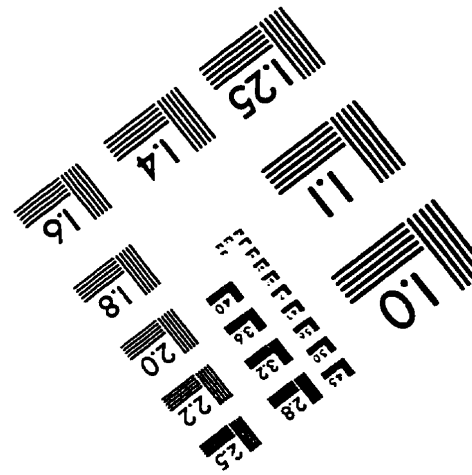
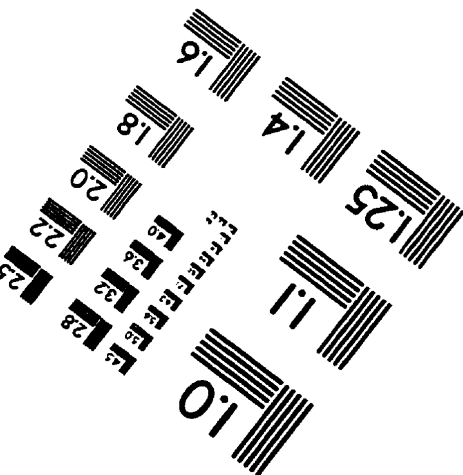
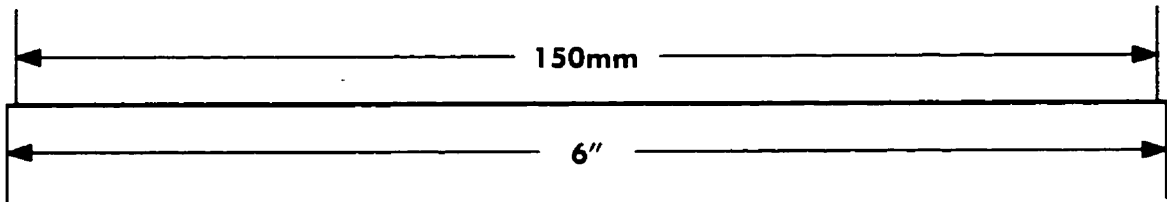
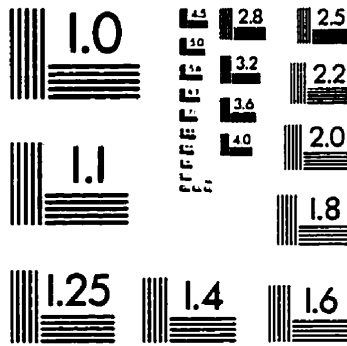
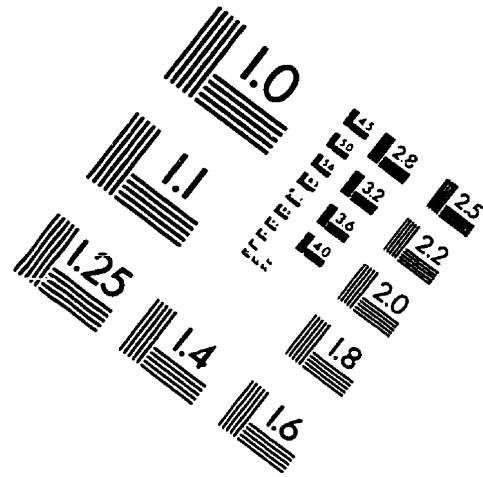
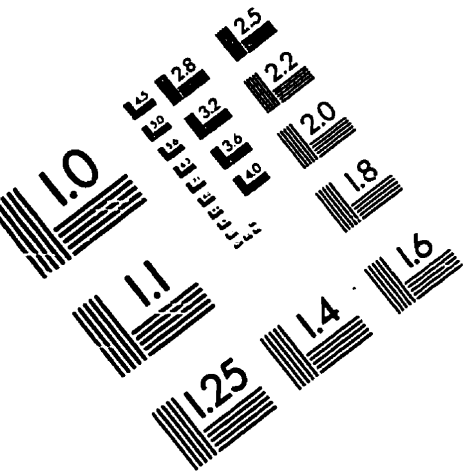
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