

China's differences with the Soviet Union affect China's policies on many issues, is quite another.

For my part, I tried to tell those I met not only what Canada's policy is on international questions, but also what geographic, historic, human and economic factors shape our foreign policy. I explained how we view the world and our role in it and gave particular emphasis to our policy of living distinct from but in harmony with our great southern neighbour. I am convinced that through official and informal talks, as well as through the numerous contacts established by Canadians who were in China this summer, the Chinese now know a great deal more about who we are, what we think and do, as well as what we can produce and sell.

I spent a total of ten days in China. In such a short time, one doesn't become an expert on a country like China. But any traveller is bound to be struck by certain things about the country itself. The first thing that strikes anyone who travels about the country as extensively as I did -- by plane, train, car and boat, and for a hundred yards or so by bicycle -- is that China is first and foremost an agrarian society. All the Chinese officials who spoke to me constantly stressed this. They all set their first priority as agriculture; second, light industry and third, heavy industry. This emphasis on agriculture, on food production, is evident everywhere. Others have said it before me, but now I can say it from my own observation: China is a garden. There is not a square inch of arable soil that is not cultivated. My picture of China is of people in the fields working, planting, harvesting, weeding, fertilizing, irrigating, making the best possible use of the land. What the Chinese have achieved in the countryside is enormous. Chinese agriculture is not yet mechanized, at least not by Canadian standards. The Chinese are, however, aware of the need to simplify some tasks by letting machines do the work. Gradually, tractors and more sophisticated agricultural tools and equipment are being introduced. But such tools or machines are more likely to bear the stamp "Made in the People's Republic of China" than any other.

This is because the Chinese are determined to become and to remain self-reliant. China does not intend to depend, economically or politically, on other countries. This has some significance for Canada's political relations with China but more for our commercial relations; only if we understand that point will we be successful in trading with China. Self-reliance and foreign trade are not mutually exclusive. As China's standard of living rises, as China increases its capacity to meet its own needs, so also will China's capacity to import. Of course, the Chinese Government will not leave its imports to chance, any more than it does now. Imports will be planned, and planned with a view to making China self-sufficient. If I could leave one idea with this audience, it would be this: China wants the capacity to look after her own needs. If we can contribute to that capacity, then we will be successful.

The third very strong impression I had is that China is determined to take its place in the world, a place in keeping with China's size and its importance. Yet its leaders disavow any intention of assuming the role of a super-power. The Chinese make much of this point: they say they are not now, nor will ever be, a super-power. But how does one measure power? Super-power or not, China is a great country. The Chinese have already begun to have a profound effect on the course of events in the world. They will surely continue to do so.