



Statements and Speeches

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NEW CANADIAN TIES WITH CHINA

A Statement by Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau in the House of Commons, October 19, 1973.

...I should like to report to Honourable Members on my visit to China, which, as the House knows, concluded just a few hours ago.

The invitation to me to visit the People's Republic of China was first extended by Premier Chou En-lai two years ago and was renewed again several months ago.

We left Canada with high expectations. I am able to say that the willingness of the Chinese Government to accept our point of view and to engage with us in activities of benefit for the people of Canada more than met those expectations. The high degree of interest of the Chinese Government in Canada and the willingness of that Government to work towards the maintenance and strengthening of friendly relations with Canada was made evident by the amount of time they, the Chinese leaders, were willing to devote to me and to my party. Chairman Mao Tse-tung extended to me the courtesy of a long conversation. Premier Chou En-lai met with me for many hours of formal discussions over the course of several days and chatted with me at even greater length in informal circumstances on a number of occasions.

One of the main objectives of any visit by a head of government, whether a Canadian travelling abroad or a prime minister coming here, is to ensure that each country understands the policies of the other and the circumstances which give rise to those policies. It is seldom possible to come to agreement on the wisdom or the effectiveness of all policies, nor would one expect that this could be the case in a world in which the vagaries of history, the realities of geography, and the variations of social systems lend distinctive directions and points of view to governmental policies. What I found most heartening, however, in my discussions with the Chinese leaders was their understanding of, and sympathy for, Canada's foreign policy. In particular, I was not subjected to any demands that future Canadian relations with China would depend for their warmth on our attitudes towards any other country. I stated in Peking, both in the privacy of conversation with the Premier and on public occasions, that Canadian foreign policy sought to avoid tension, to strengthen the institutions of international co-operation and to assist the economic development of the newly-
