



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
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No. 54/49 SHOULD CANADA RECOGNIZE RED CHINA?

A statement by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. L.B. Pearson, for the "Peoples School", St. Francis Xavier University, Antigonish, N.S., November 7, 1954.

Since the Communist regime was established in Peking on October 1, 1949, the question of its recognition has received wide discussion in Canada, with honest differences of opinion vigorously expressed.

First of all, what is the meaning of this word "recognition"? According to international law, the principal condition which a government must fulfil in order to qualify for diplomatic recognition is that it exercise effective control over its national territory and have a reasonable prospect of permanence. But there are important additional factors, such as the extent to which the government commands the obedience of the bulk of the population and its willingness to honour its international obligations. To be eligible for recognition a government need not be either democratic in our sense, or even fully representative of its people. Applying these criteria fourteen countries, outside the Soviet bloc, and including the United Kingdom, have recognized the Peking regime.

We are all agreed, I think, that the Communist Government does control the actions of a majority of the Chinese people, whether we or they like it or not. But have the Chinese Communists shown up to now that they are prepared sincerely to assume the duties and responsibilities of membership in the international community? Furthermore, armed intervention by the Chinese Communist forces in Korea against the United Nations has, to say the least, raised grave doubts as to their peaceful intentions. For these reasons, the Canadian Government has taken the position that unless and until there is some evidence of a genuine disposition to follow the rules of acceptable international behaviour the Chinese Communist Government has no claim to our formal recognition. To specify in advance and in detail the conditions which would have to be met before such recognition could be given is difficult. Indeed, to try to do so would, as I see it, be neither entirely logical or wise, in view of the traditional policy of this and most other free