

During the past few years we have also seen welcome change on the political front, even if the depth of reform has been less than in economic areas. We have seen more freedom of the press, more freedom of speech, more freedom of association, less control on travel, more flexible policies on emigration, and even some tentative signs of willingness to accept legitimate political action expressed through vehicles other than the Communist Party.

Indeed, the last few weeks of political difficulty were in some ways a signal of the great strides that China seemed to have taken. Students in great numbers were tolerated in the non-violent expression of their desires for further change. Their cries for greater democracy, for the establishment of basic rights and freedoms appeared to be getting through to the Government. We watched some of China's leaders express sympathy, understanding and, most important, respect for the objectives of the intentions of the students.

Those were positive signs of a nation in the process of change. Many among us believed that China would somehow manage this pressure for change by becoming more democratic, more open and more respectful of its own people.

When the tanks and the troops moved in on Tiananmen Square on Saturday night, it was clear that the forces of darkness and not of light had triumphed. It was clear that leaders who had urged restraint were being brushed aside. It was clear that the aspirations of a few were being placed ahead of the aspirations of the many.

It is very much because of the great strides forward which China has taken over the last decade that the events of the last few days are so tragic for China and so tragic for those principles and freedoms which we hold dear and which we had thought were starting to find their proper place in Chinese political life as well.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, our relations with China have been very important to us and they still are. In 1970, we were one of the first Western countries to resume diplomatic relations with the People's Republic after that country's twenty years of isolation.

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Since then, our relations have become such that anything that happens in China is a matter of great interest to Canadians.

Exchanges involving scientists, students, cultural groups and teams of athletes became common and have been encouraged by both sides.

Our two countries have organized the twinning of many provinces and cities. All this has enabled us to have high level discussions with the Chinese leaders on matters of common interest. Such matters might range from regional disputes to protecting the environment and how to make the world trading system more sensitive to the needs of our two economies.

Our trade has benefited both our countries. Thanks to our development assistance program, we have expanded China's ability to modernize and we have introduced in China the Canadian way of doing things. I firmly believe that the range and intensity of our relations with China has enriched both our countries.

[*English*]

The extent of the friendship between Canadians and Chinese that has grown over the last decade makes the carnage in the streets of the Chinese capital particularly difficult to accept. As we examine what our response should be, however, we must remember that we will cherish our friendship with the Chinese people, that we are not going to become in this country anti-China.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): Our condemnation and our outrage should be focused on the violent and aggressive actions that we cannot and will never condone and on those who initiated and encouraged those actions.

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As soon as the military strike against the civilians in Tiananmen Square became known to us on Saturday, we made clear our abhorrence of the unnecessary and indiscriminate use of force against unarmed students and citizens. As the events unfolded and the extent of the violence and the killing became clear, we called on the Chinese Government in the strongest possible terms to take steps urgently and immediately to stop the aggressive and senseless killing by its Armed Forces.

Yesterday at noon I had the Chinese Ambassador called in to underline the seriousness with which we