

N A T I O N S

I N • T H E • N E W S

**On the Record**

Excerpts from Prime Minister Jean Chrétien's speech to the School of Economics and Management of Qinghua University, Beijing, China, November 20, 1998

It has often been said that Asia and Western nations are separated by a divide of values that cannot be bridged. With a deep attachment to collective interests and stability on one side, and an equally abiding attachment to individual rights on the other. And never the twain shall meet.

I do not accept that.

It does not do justice to the diversity of Asian values. Nor is it an honest representation of the balance between individual rights and the needs of society that you find in Canada — and throughout the Western world....

We recognize that extreme individualism — ignoring the greater needs of society — can make for an unstable, even chaotic, society.... But we also recognize that human progress requires the vibrancy, creativity and imagination that can only come from individuals exercising all the freedom necessary to achieve their dreams, ambitions and potential....

We, in Canada, have much to learn from China, with her rich history.... But I would be less than frank if I did not say directly to you that many Canadians are disturbed when we hear reports from your country of restrictions on the right to free expression of different political views. And particularly when we hear of people being harassed and imprisoned for expressing political views different from the government.

When Canadians hear of such things, the progress that China is making on so many political and social fronts is often forgotten. And indeed progress is being made. We were very pleased that China has signed the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, enshrining the freedoms of speech and assembly and participation in public affairs and elections. This follows her signing last year of the UN Covenant on Economic, Cultural and Social Rights. We urge China to place a high priority on ratifying and implementing these covenants....

Canada and China are travelling a common path to the future.... The friendship between Canada and China is a long one. Built on mutual respect, understanding and openness. Built on wisdom!

That spirit has brought us together time and again in this century. And as I reflect on what I have seen at Qinghua, I have no doubt that it will bring us even closer in the next century. ●—

To obtain a copy of the speech and more information about the Prime Minister's trip to China, please visit the following Web site: <http://pm.gc.ca>. To learn more about Canada's presence in China, please visit: www.canada.org.hk

Canada-China**An ever-expanding partnership**

The official visit to China by Prime Minister Jean Chrétien in November confirmed once again the ever-expanding partnership between our two countries, notably on human rights issues. For instance, the Prime Minister announced a series of initiatives in the areas of governance, law, and human rights. Projects include training for state prosecutors in criminal trials, assistance to the development of a national legal aid system, and the development, with Chinese partners, of a strategy for the integration into Chinese law of the UN conventions on Economic, Cultural and Social Rights and on Political and Civil Rights, both recently signed by China.

The two governments also announced that the second Asia-Pacific Plurilateral Symposium on Human Rights, co-hosted by Canada and China, would be held in Beijing during the first half of 1999. The firstone was held in Canada in March of 1998.

These latest developments prompted Prime Minister Chrétien to say that, "while we do not always see eye to eye with the Chinese Government on human rights questions, we have a productive dialogue, a track-record of engagement that makes a real difference for people, and a shared commitment that economic progress without civil and human progress is meaningless."

On the environment front, Canada and China are being innovative. The signing of the Canada-China Framework for Cooperation into the 21st century paves the way for enhanced bilateral activity in a broad array of environmental issues and calls for the involvement of various organizations from both countries. The Framework opens the door for bilateral cooperation on climate change and, as such, is one of the first agreements of its kind to be signed between two countries.

Finally, some 46 commercial agreements worth almost \$721 million were signed during the Canada-China Business Forum in Beijing. This prompted International Trade Minister Sergio Marchi to say, "These agreements send a strong message that Canada is broadening and diversifying its trade and investment presence in China."

The agreements include a project by Lavergne China Inc. of Montréal to build a facility to turn contaminated plastic into high-value, semi-finished plastic products; the supply by Newbridge Networks of Kanata of ATM switch equipment that will provide data, voice and multimedia communications and will allow *China Post* to optimize its services; and the provision by Teshmont Consultants Ltd. of Winnipeg of engineering consulting services and the engineering and procurement of high voltage electrical equipment to China Three Gorges Power Corp. ●—