

## PARLIAMENTARY COMMENT

Beginning on 5 June 1989, the House of Commons debated the events taking place in China and Canada's response to them. During Question Period and in an emergency debate called on 5 June, some forty Members of Parliament addressed the issue. Many spoke of the history of Canada-China relations; expressed shock, grief and outrage at the Chinese Government's 3 and 4 June 1989 crackdown on pro-democracy protesters and killing of civilians; and pressed for various diplomatic and economic sanctions against the Chinese Government. (For the complete text of the all-Party Resolution passed by the House condemning the Chinese Government, refer to Parliamentary Comment in Chapter 27 of *The Guide*, Human Rights.)

At various times on subsequent days in the House, Opposition Members questioned and suggested measures that could be taken by the Canadian Government. Issues raised included the recall of the Canadian Ambassador to China<sup>12</sup>; reported defections of Chinese embassy staff in Canada<sup>13</sup>; the evacuation of Canadians in China<sup>14</sup>; sponsorship of Chinese families wishing to join their relatives in Canada<sup>15</sup>; requests from Chinese refugees for Canadian visas<sup>16</sup>; the relaxation of Canadian immigration rules for Chinese nationals<sup>17</sup>; and consultations with other nations and multilateral organizations on this matter.<sup>18</sup> Mr. Clark announced many of the Government's positions and measures (described in the previous section) during these debates.

In addition to the above-mentioned matters, several MPs called on the Government to press for UN Security Council debate on the events in China.<sup>19</sup> Liberal MP Jesse Flis asked Mr. Clark about this possibility:

...On Monday [5 June 1989], the Secretary of State for External Affairs said that Canada was considering as a member of the United Nations Security Council an initiative to put pressure on the Chinese leadership to stop the bloodshed.... On Tuesday [6 June 1989], he said that the United Nations had no mandate in a country's internal affairs.... The conflict may well be within the walls of China. However, considering China's nuclear capability the general instability poses an imminent threat to global security.... In light of this, will the...[Minister] tell us what steps he has taken to convince the Assembly that the situation does pose a potential global threat and therefore does indeed fall within the United Nations mandate of ensuring global peace and security?

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12 *Commons Debates*, 14 June 1989, p. 3012.

13 *Commons Debates*, 16 June 1989, p. 3134.

14 *Commons Debates*, 6 June 1989, p. 2661.

15 *Ibid.*, p. 2662-2663.

16 *Commons Debates*, 14 June 1989, p. 3009.

17 *Commons Debates*, 5 June 1989, p. 2551; and 16 June 1989, p. 3137.

18 *Commons Debates*, 6 June 1989, pp. 2661-2662.

19 *Commons Debates*, 5 June 1989, pp. 2552, 2595 and 2612; and 16 June 1989, p. 3134.