

The issue of human rights is on the agenda of all senior bilateral meetings, and has constituted a substantive part of the discussions held by Secretary of State for External Affairs Barbara McDougall with Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen at the United Nations General Assembly in New York in September 1991 and September 1992, and at the APEC ministerial meeting in Seoul in November 1991. Canadian concerns about human rights were also raised by Agriculture Minister Bill McKnight and Minister of International Relations Michael Wilson during their visits to China in October 1991 and April 1992 respectively.

Three Canadian Members of Parliament, representing the three major national political parties, visited China Jan. 4-7, 1992, in order to discuss the human rights situation in China and meet with Chinese citizens. The Chinese authorities forced the delegation to leave China, along with their interpreter from a Canadian non-governmental organization, alleging that their activities were incompatible with their status. The Canadian government lodged a protest with the Chinese Ambassador in Ottawa, as well as through the Canadian Ambassador in Beijing.

Despite Canada's objections to the human rights situation in China, Canada has sought to avoid isolating China or breaking off contacts between Canadians and the Chinese people. China's Cultural Revolution demonstrated that China's worst human rights abuses have occurred during China's periods of greatest isolation.

POINTS FOR DISCUSSION

- Given China's past success in defeating resolutions at CHR, and its continued influence among the majority of CHR members, what are the pros and cons of continued Western efforts to obtain Commission action on this issue ?

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