

**CANADA'S CHINA POLICY IN THE 1990s:  
PRAGMATISM, PROGRESS, AND PROSPECTS\***

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**INTRODUCTION**

Since the early 1990s, Canada's China policy has shifted both from an earlier period (1968-1988) of "special relationship" and the immediate post-Tiananmen shock to a more pragmatic approach of engagement and dialogue. This approach has been based on a more realistic assessment of China's role in the Asia-Pacific region and its potentials as an emerging global power, and Ottawa's ability to apply its "soft power" to influence events, in particular in seeing a growing and responsible China that is crucial to regional stability in the years to come, hence promoting Canadian values and interests, viz., international and regional order, human security, and increased opportunities for trade and investment.

This policy paper takes stock of Canada's China policy over the past decade, focusing in particular on issues of security and arms control and disarmament, with a view to both assessing the debates and discussion leading to various policy options, their objectives, achievements and limitation, and suggesting innovative policy options that can best meet Canadian foreign (security) policy objectives of promoting international and regional peace and stability, good governance, and the elimination of weapons of mass destruction and inhumane and illicit use of conventional weapons.

There has been a general consensus within Canadian academic community and policy making circles that China's perceptions of, and approaches to, cooperative security and multilateralism can have great impact on the evolving international relations in post-Cold War Asia Pacific. Indeed, one can argue that the very catalyst of Asia-Pacific multilateralism as advocated and promoted by Canada can be said to have derived from

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