

Let me thank you in the Canadian and Chinese business communities for the pioneering work you are doing for Canada here in China.

The economic frontiers you are exploring, the business you are building and the friendships you are making form an important foundation for our future relationship with China.

Today, Canada's relationship with China is rich and runs deep. I want to say it has a long history, but we should keep it in perspective.

Over the great span of history, China has been a global leader much of the past 3,000 or more years.

Canada is a young nation. Our history with China goes back less than 200 years.

But in that time, our two countries have developed close ties.

Strategically positioned around the Pacific Rim, our people, our economies and our histories have intermingled.

Some one million Chinese immigrants to Canada have made a profound contribution to the Canada we know today.

Cities like Vancouver and Toronto are now home to North America's most vibrant Chinese communities. And Chinese is our most widely spoken language, after English and French (our official languages).

If you connect the dots you will also find the "China factor" driving other big shifts and changes in Canada.

With China and other Asian dynamos pulling the world's economic centre of gravity toward the Orient, Canada's own economic centre of gravity is being pulled westward, toward the Pacific.

What you would have trouble finding is a Canadian sector or region that is *not* facing adjustments to the China factor... adjustments to Chinese demand for goods and services; adjustments to Chinese cost structures and increasingly sophisticated supply chains.

But influence and change run in both directions ways.

Canadian missionaries built hospitals and schools here in China. Dr. Norman Bethune left a mark that evokes positive feelings among the Chinese people to this day.

Our humanitarian presence, plus the historic commercial networks of companies like Manulife, opened Canadian eyes to China's potential, and we responded.