

Survey of Relations

CANADA AND THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

The increasing involvement of the People's Republic of China, following the Cultural Revolution, in contemporary international affairs is one of the most significant factors influencing international politics today. The 1970 review of Canada's external relations, Foreign Policy for Canadians, expressed "the hope that Canada would be able to make a contribution towards bringing China into a more constructive relationship with the world community", Canada's establishment of diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China in 1970, our part in the assumption by Peking of China's seat in the United Nations, and the vigorous program of exchanges carried out over the past several years has been a contributing factor in the emergence of China from its earlier isolation.

While it is impossible to determine the exact measure of Canada's contribution to China's decision to become a major and responsible actor in international affairs, Canada's role can be considered a distinctive and important accomplishment of contemporary Canadian foreign policy. A remarkable degree of confidence has been established between the two countries given the limits that history, geography and differing political viewpoints impose.

Relations Prior to 1970

Canadian missionaries and merchants provided Canada's earliest contacts with China in the late 19th century. In 1906 the Canadian Government opened a Commercial Office in Shanghai.

Although a Chinese Consulate General was established in Ottawa, with offices in Vancouver, Toronto and Winnipeg, prior to 1909, an ambassadorial exchange was not agreed upon until 1941. It was not until April 1943 that a Canadian legation was established in China.

In April 1949 the People's Liberation Army entered the capital of the Nationalist Government, Nanjing. The Canadian Embassy in Nanjing closed in 1951 and the Canadian Consulate in Shanghai in 1952. This marked the end of Canada's old relationship with China.

During the following two decades Canada maintained no official relations with the People's Republic of China. The "Republic of China" maintained an embassy in Ottawa, but Canada as a matter of policy did not reciprocate in Taipei. While it was clear that the Peking Government was in effective control of the mainland and therefore met the classic test for recognition, the atmosphere of bitterness