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CHINESE REPRESENTATION IN THE UNITED NATIONS

Statement by the Honourable Paul Martin,
Secretary of State for External Affairs,
November 17, 1965.

The General Assembly has again considered the issue of Chinese representation. Once again it has voted not to seat representatives of the Government of Communist China in the United Nations at the price of expelling the representatives of the Government of the Republic of China. Canada would have welcomed the opportunity to see Communist China take a seat in the world organization had Peking made this possible. If that has not yet happened, it is because Peking itself has set a price on participation which is unacceptable. In the view of the Canadian Government it is not for the United Nations to accommodate itself to the views of a single nation, however powerful or populous. It is for Communist China to make that accommodation. Much to the regret of the Canadian Government there is no present evidence that she is ready to do so.

This year's vote was taken against a background of growing disquiet over the purposes and policies of the Government of Communist China. There is concern in many countries of Africa and Asia about the circumstances in which Communist China forced the postponement of an Afro-Asian Conference which it concluded it could not dominate. There is concern over the attitude of Communist China towards the recent unsettling events in Indonesia. There is concern over the declared opposition of the Government of Communist China to any kind of negotiated solution of the situation in Vietnam. And there is also concern over the doctrine of armed revolution which has only recently been reaffirmed by the Government of Communist China and from which no government, whatever its status, is apparently immune.

These actions and attitudes on the part of Communist China have led some countries to conclude that it does not meet the qualifications of membership in the United Nations. The opposition of these countries has been reinforced by the attitude of the Government of Communist China itself, which has attacked and sought to discredit the United Nations to the point of urging the creation of a rival world organization. Other countries, however, feel that the course of recent developments in the policies of the Peking Government makes it all the more necessary to bring representatives of that Government into some form of relationship with the international community as represented by the United Nations and its organs.

As far as Canada is concerned, we have consistently supported the principle of universality in the United Nations. We supported that principle ten years ago, when Canada was instrumental in breaking the deadlock that had been responsible for barring a substantial number of countries from United Nations membership. When I addressed the present General Assembly on September 24, I reiterated Canada's support for the principle of universality and expressed the hope that the United Nations could make progress towards the achievement of universal membership as soon as possible. If the United Nations is to be an effective organ of international opinion it must be able, ultimately, to bring all members of the international community within the framework of the obligations and responsibilities laid down in the Charter.

Canada has endorsed the view of the Secretary-General that it is in the interests of the international community to have Communist China exposed to the currents and cross-currents of international opinion. We also believe that there are problems in the realm of international peace and security which require the co-operation of Communist China for their solution. We have made it clear that we regard disarmament as one such problem and have supported Communist Chinese participation in any world disarmament conference.

It is in this spirit that Canada approached the problem of Chinese representation at the current session of the General Assembly. Nevertheless, after very careful consideration, the Canadian Government decided that it could not, in present circumstances, do other than vote against the resolution which was before the Assembly. In voting as it did the Canadian Government was guided by the following considerations.

First, in a press conference on September 29, the Communist Chinese Foreign Minister, Marshal Chen Yi, posed a number of new conditions which would have to be satisfied if Communist China was to agree to take its seat in the United Nations. As part of these conditions the United Nations was being asked to rescind its resolution condemning Communist China as an aggressor in Korea, where Canadians fought and died to defeat aggression. It was being asked to review and revise its Charter. And it was being asked to admit to membership all so-called independent countries and to eject from membership all those which Peking chooses to regard as "imperialist puppet states". It seemed to the Canadian Government that these new conditions raised the fundamental question whether Peking itself still desires to participate in the United Nations.

Second, there is another condition of long standing from which Communist China has never departed. This is that the population of Formosa must be denied any form of representation in the United Nations. The Canadian Government cannot be unmindful of the fact that the Government of the Republic of China is a founding member of the United Nations and one which exercises control over a population of some 12 million people. It cannot disregard the claim of the population of Formosa to be allowed to play their full and honourable part in the life of the international community. Canada, for one, could not agree that it would be in accordance with the principles of the United Nations to support an arrangement which would result in a denial of that claim.

Third, whether we like it or not, this is an important issue which, in one way or another, could affect the balance of forces in the world. It is not an issue that can be considered in isolation. It must be part of any independent policy judgment that Canada assess the total impact of the seating of Communist China on its other relationships and on the United Nations itself in the present circumstances.

It remains the hope of the Canadian Government that Communist China will itself come to recognize that it must be prepared to take a seat in the United Nations and negotiate its differences as other states have done and are bound to do under the United Nations Charter. We also hope that some means may be found by which further clarification could be obtained as to the intentions of the Government of the People's Republic of China regarding membership in the United Nations before this issue is dealt with again in the General Assembly. In the meantime it will continue to be the policy of the Canadian Government to do what it can to encourage the establishment of mutually beneficial contacts between Canada and Communist China and between Communist China and the rest of the international community.

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