

# Statement

Secretary of  
State for  
External Affairs



# Déclaration

Secrétaire  
d'État aux  
Affaires  
extérieures

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NOTES FOR A SPEECH BY THE  
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS,  
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE JOE CLARK,  
FOR A DINNER ON THE OCCASION OF  
THE VISIT OF  
SIR DAVID WILSON, GOVERNOR OF HONG KONG,  
TO CANADA

HULL, QUEBEC  
MAY 22, 1990.

Governor,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour and a distinct pleasure for me to be able to welcome you to Ottawa. Yours is an historic visit, the first by a Governor of Hong Kong to Canada. Your visit provides an opportunity to celebrate the strong ties between Canada and Hong Kong, ties of history, of trade, of family, and of trust.

We are not strangers. The links between Canada and Hong Kong stretch back over the centuries. To the days of the British Empire, the days of sailing ships, a period when thousands of Southern Chinese arrived in British Columbia and contributed so much to the building of our young nation.

The complex history of ties between Hong Kong and Canada also extends to earlier, sad days of conflict. In 1939, Canadian troops were called upon to defend Hong Kong. 550 Canadian soldiers died during that conflict. They are not forgotten; every December their sacrifice is commemorated at Sai Wan cemetery.

Hong Kong owes its origins to its role as an entrepot post in the China trade, a role which the territory continues to fulfill with brilliance. It is out of this role that a strong trading relationship across the Pacific developed with Canada. That trading relationship continues and grows to this day. Two-way trade stands out over \$2.2 billion, and Hong Kong investment in Canada was \$2.4 billion in 1989 alone.

But our relationship goes well beyond the ties of trade and investment. An important bridge between us has been the flow of people. From modest 19th century beginnings, emigration to Canada has expanded dramatically. One in seven new immigrants to Canada now comes from Hong Kong. Hong Kong is our largest single source of new citizens. Hundred of thousands of Canadians of Hong Kong origin are contributing their tremendous talents and hard work in almost every field of human endeavour.

These new Canadians are helping to build a modern and dynamic and multicultural Canada. We are proud of their contribution. That contribution not only enriches Canadian society; it is also a business asset, an invaluable resource for Canada as we seek to compete successfully and develop new markets in the Pacific.

The flow of people has not been just one way. The Canadian population in Hong Kong now exceeds 30,000. That is the largest Canadian community in Asia. In addition, some 70,000 Hong Kong graduates of Canadian universities live and work in Hong Kong, enhancing the strong personal links between our two societies.

Both of us depend heavily on trade for our prosperity and security. The people of Hong Kong are the singular traders of Asia and your city remains the best entrée to the Asia market. Canada and Hong Kong share a common commitment to open markets and freer trade around the world. And in the Pacific region, we share an interest in promoting prosperity through more liberal trade in goods and services.

Our shared interest in freer trade was demonstrated by the fact that the Hong Kong business community was among the first to recognize that the Canada-US Free Trade Agreement would have a positive impact on Canadian trade with all our partners. The Free Trade Agreement will continue to act as a catalyst for the Canada/Hong Kong economic partnership.

Your Excellency, the growth of Hong Kong from a quiet harbor on the South China Sea to a dynamic and creative center for global finance, trade and industry has been an extraordinary triumph of human will and ingenuity. It is also testimony to the values of human freedom and the rule of law.

Canada has an abiding interest in the shape of post-1997 Hong Kong. The undertakings between Great Britain and China, reflected in the Basic Law, provide a framework for the future. But that future will only be bright if these undertakings are observed in their spirit as well as their letter.

There is no doubt that confidence in Hong Kong was shaken by the tragic events in the Chinese capital in June, 1989. You have already taken many positive steps to face this challenge. Canada strongly supports these steps - your bold infrastructure projects, your accelerated pace of democratization and your Bill of Rights.

As you face the future, you can be assured of our steadfast support. Canada stands ready to help. Let me provide some examples.

- We are exploring with Britain and China the establishment of a wide network of bilateral agreements between Hong Kong and Canada. This network would preserve the informal ties which have developed between Canada and Hong Kong. We believe this would be fully consistent with the Sino-British Joint Declaration. The purpose of that network will be to make it clear that the unique role of Hong Kong will not change in 1997. It is our goal to ensure that at the turn of the century the opportunities for co-operation between Canada and Hong Kong are the same then as they are now.

- In 1988, we signed our first bilateral air agreement with Hong Kong and there is now direct service between Canada and Hong Kong.

- In April of this year, we initialled a bilateral mutual legal assistance treaty. That agreement, the first ever entered into by Hong Kong, will promote co-operation in the fight against the international drug trade.

- As Hong Kong drafted its Bill of Rights, we seconded a senior justice of the Federal Court to Hong Kong to assist in drafting that important document. Judge Strayer's contribution is a demonstration of our commitment to providing expertise as Hong Kong builds its own durable and democratic institutions.

- We have initiated discussions designed to put in place an exchange program of officials between our two governments. This would enable young leaders to gain familiarity with the Canadian approach to the regulation of financial institutions, broadcasting, and transport.

- Canada and Hong Kong have entered into discussions of a film co-production agreement.

- And after the conclusion of the multilateral trade negotiations, we will explore a financial market access agreement whereby the existing environment governing financial institutions in Hong Kong is preserved.

- Finally, Canada believes strongly that Hong Kong should participate in the emerging web of regional institutions. This includes Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation and the Pacific Economic Conference. We also strongly support Hong Kong's participation in other international agencies, including the GATT and OECD.

Your Excellency, Canada's commitment to, and our faith in, the future of Hong Kong is unwavering. We have made this clear to both the British and Chinese governments. We are prepared to do our part to ensure that Hong Kong's future remains bright and that the relationship between us continues to be strong and to grow.

Your Excellency, if you take back one message to the people of Hong Kong, let it be a clear and simple one: that Canada is committed to your success, and that we will stand by you faithfully in the critical years which lie ahead.