

Canada - China
Legislative Association



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Report of the Delegation of the Canada-China Legislative Association

to the

Ninth bilateral Consultations Beijing, Guangzhou, Macao, Hong Kong October 7-15, 2006

At the invitation of the China Canada Legislative Association (China), a Canadian parliamentary delegation, led by the Co-chairs of the Canada China Legislative Association (Canada), the Hon. Joseph Day, Senator and Mr. Tom Wappel, Member of Parliament, visited the People's Republic of China from October 7 to 15, 2006.

Report

Context

At the invitation of the China Canada Legislative Association (China), a Canadian parliamentary delegation, led by the Co-chairs of the Canada China Legislative Association (Canada), the Hon. Joseph Day, Senator and Mr. Tom Wappel, Member of Parliament, visited the People's Republic of China from October 7 to 15, 2006. The delegation participated in the Ninth Bilateral Consultations between the two respective associations. Built upon the Eight Bilateral Consultations, which were held in Canada in June 2006, annual consultations are held on a rotational basis between the two countries. Both sides agreed to strengthen the mechanisms for exchanges, deepen friendship and further develop cooperation between the two countries.

The visit began in Beijing where the Bilateral Consultations and meetings with high ranking officials were held. The delegation then proceeded to visit Guangzhou City (Guangdong Province.) This portion of the visit allowed the delegation to better understand the economic development in China and the implications and potential for Canada. Guangdong Province is China's major manufacturing centre for light industry and enjoys a GDP of 13% GDP and accounts for 9% of China's total GDP, 25% of its FDI, and 34% of its total exports.

The delegation concluded its visit in Macao, a former Portuguese colony that was retroceded to China in 1999. The Special Administrative Region of Macao offers business opportunities in the areas of agri-food, transportation, entertainment, professional services and security technology and provides yet a different perspective of China's development.

Objectives

- To further strengthen the relationship between Canadian parliamentarians and members of the National People's Congress;
- To discuss the political relationship between Canada and China; and
- To promote bilateral trade and investment opportunities.

Delegation:

Hon. Joseph Day, Senator Co-chair of CCLA, Tom Wappel, M.P., Co-chair of CCLA, Hon. Jack Austin, P.C., Senator, Hon. Pat Carney, P.C., Senator, Charles Hubbard, P.C., M.P., John Maloney, M.P., Bob Mills, M.P., Gord Brown, M.P., Daryl Kramp, M.P., Luc Malo, M.P., Norm Radford, Secretary to the delegation

Official Meetings:

Beijing: Mr. Wu Bangguo, Chairman of the National People's Congress Standing Committee; Mr Sheng Huaren, Vice-chair and Secretary General of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress; Mr. Lu Congmin, Vice-Chair of Foreign Affairs Committee, National People's Congress and Chair of the CCLA. Mr. He Yafei,

Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs; *Guangzhou*: Mr. Zhong Qiquan, Vice Chairman of the Standing Committee of Guangdong People's Congress; Mr. Chen Mingde, Vice Mayor of Guangzhou; *Macao (Special Administrative Region)*: Mr. Edmund Ho, Chief Executive of Macao.

Other Meetings and Activities

Guangzhou: Mr. Rick Li, Development Director, Guangdong Nortel Research and Development; Canadian business representatives; the delegation visited Huamei-Bond International College; *Macao (SAR)*: Mr. Ao Man-Long, Secretary for Transport and Public Works. Mr. Echo Chan Keng Hong, Deputy President, Macao Trade and Investment Promotion Institute; the delegation visited the International School of Macao.

In addition, the delegation received comprehensive briefings from Ambassador Robert Wright and program managers from the Canadian Embassy; Consul General Tim Coughlin and his senior officials from the Consulate (Guangdong Province); and Consul General Gerry Campbell (Hong Kong) and his senior officials.

Beijing

Mr. Lu Congmin extended a very warm welcome to the Canadian delegation and opened the meeting by providing a positive scenario of the evolving relationship between Canada and China over the past thirty six years of diplomatic relations. Within this context, he praised the long history and accomplishments of the two parliamentary associations.

Parliamentarians raised a number of issues including Approved Destination Status (ADS) for Canada, the rule of law, human rights, the importation of Canadian beef, energy, the environment and bilateral relations between the two countries.

The Chinese reassured the Canadians that the issue of ADS for Canada was of importance to China. However, according to the Chinese side, the onus is on the Canadian Government to take the necessary steps to ensure the success of the negotiations.

Regarding the rule of law, the Chinese informed the Canadians that legal reform in China became a government priority in the 1990s. At that time, China enacted legislation designed to modernize and professionalize the nation's lawyers, judges and property and commercial laws. Individual human rights, commercial rights and property rights are now protected under the Chinese Constitution.

The environment, the delegation was told, has become a major preoccupation of the Chinese. The National People's Congress has enacted laws for environmental protection, which now form a basic national policy for China. China will optimize its industrial structure to reduce environmental degradation by decreasing coal dependency and increasing the use of clean air technology. With regard to energy, the Chinese noted that Chinese oil companies are investing in the Alberta Oil Sands.

On the question of the import of Canadian beef, the Chinese noted that negotiations are ongoing.

A substantive discussion followed on the subject of Canada-China bilateral relations. Although the Chinese noted that Canada was a long-time friend of China, they expressed concern over the apparent increase in “contradictions” between the two countries. The Chinese raised the numerous recent visits to Taiwan by Canadian parliamentarians, the granting of honorary Canadian citizenship to the Dalai Lama and the perceived tolerance of Canadian authorities towards Falun Gong demonstrators. The Canadian parliamentarians reassured their Chinese counterparts that the Canadian government’s policy was consistent with that of previous governments. The Canadians stressed that the Canada-China Legislative Association is the only association officially recognized by the Parliament of Canada to conduct bilateral exchanges with the National People’s Congress and, as such, travel by Canadian parliamentarians on non-official activities are personal in nature and do not reflect Canadian policy.

Mr. Lu Congmin concluded the consultations by suggesting that the two associations clarify their respective functions and responsibilities, establish better mechanisms for substantive dialogue, promote the exchanges of parliamentary committees, draw lessons from each country’s legislation and encourage participation of small-scale delegations of parliamentarians in exchanges and seminars. Mr. Lu offered the suggestions in the spirit of improving the relationship between the two countries. The Chairs of the two associations agreed to exchange letters to explore ways of enhancing their current relationship.

The Canadian Co-chairs formally extended an invitation to their Chinese counterparts to visit Canada in 2007 and suggested Eastern Canada as a possible venue for the visit.

Other Meetings

The Canadian delegation was privileged to meet with Mr. Wu Bangguo, Chairman of the National People’s Congress Standing Committee and third in the national hierarchy, behind President Hu. Mr. Wu stated that Canada and China have natural affinities which make them trade partners. China remains thankful to Canada for being amongst the first countries to establish diplomatic relations with China. He stressed the importance of parliamentary diplomacy and that bilateral relationships cannot proceed without the involvement of parliamentarians. He expressed the view that differences between countries are not unusual and he echoed the comments of Mr. Lu that Taiwan and Tibet were very sensitive issues. China, he stated, was pleased that the Canadian Government reiterated the “one-China” policy. He stated that China’s rapid economic growth offered great potential for Canada and noted that there was an increase of 20% in two way trade in the first eight months of 2006. The meeting concluded on the importance of finding common ground between the two countries.

In its meeting with Mr. Sheng Huaren, Vice-chair and Secretary General of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress, the delegation had yet another opportunity to discuss the bilateral relationship between the two countries. Mr. Sheng stressed the importance of the exchange mechanism at the parliamentary level, explaining that the CCLA was the oldest parliamentary association in the National People’ Congress. Such exchanges, he stressed, allow for the increased sharing of information and reduction of misunderstandings. He expressed the wish that trade between the two countries exceed 30 billion dollars (US) by 2010. Mr. Sheng took the

opportunity to express China's deepest appreciation towards Senator Jack Austin for his contribution to the bilateral relations over many years.

The delegation completed its series of discussions in Beijing by meeting with Mr. He Yafie, Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs. The delegation had a very direct and frank discussion with the Assistant Minister about Canada-China bilateral relations. The Assistant Minister reiterated in an assertive fashion some points raised at earlier meetings regarding "differences" in the bilateral relation. The Canadians assured the Assistant Minister that Canada's current foreign policy towards China was consistent with previous Canadian Governments. Delegates reiterated that under the Canadian political system, travel to Taiwan by Canadian parliamentarians was not indicative of the government's foreign policy towards China, as these visits are of a non-official nature.

Guangzhou

As in all of its previous meetings, the Chinese hosts, signaling the importance that they attach to the relationship with Canada, warmly welcomed the delegation. Mr. Zhong Qiquan, Vice Chairman of the Standing Committee of Guangdong People's Congress (Guangdong Province), officially welcomed the delegation. Mr. Zhong provided an overview of Guangdong province, noting that its economic development was a result of the Deng Xiaoping reforms in 1978 when Beijing designated Guangdong as a pilot province for economic reform. The result is that Guangdong is now China's major manufacturing centre for light industry. It enjoys a GDP of 13% GDP and accounts for 9% of China's total GDP, 25% of its Foreign Direct Investment and 34% of its total exports. It has a permanent population of 110 million habitants.

Mr. Zhong noted that although wealthy, Guangdong is still developing. Guangdong's average per capita income of \$ 2882.00 (CAN) lags far behind that of Canada (\$36,000.00 CAN). Thirty percent of the population have social security pensions.

Some of the challenges the Province faces are energy shortages, environmental pollution and regional imbalances. He explained that the 11th Five Year Plan calls for a GDP Growth of 9% and a doubling of the annual income. Guangdong is aiming to become energy sufficient and the government wishes to remove the disparities between rural and urban areas.

Mr. Zhong, noting that Guangdong Province has a sister relationship with the Province of British Columbia, encouraged Canadian companies to invest in Guangdong, stating that the Nortel R&D Research Centre, which the Canadian delegation visited during their program, is a good example of a Canadian firm investing in China.

The delegation made a courtesy call on Vice Mayor Chen Ming De of Guangzhou. The latter echoed the comments of Vice Chairman Zhong Qiquan and emphasized the importance of the relationship with Canada, citing that Guangdong had a sister relationship with British Columbia and Guangzhou with the City of Vancouver. The Vice Mayor provided an overview of the strong economic performance of Guangdong since the reform policies of 1978. Guangzhou, he stated, had the third highest GDP of the ten largest cities in China, after Beijing and Shanghai. The City is installing a new subway line and will be hosting the ASEAN Games in 2010.

Macao (Special Administrative Region)

The delegation met with Mr. Edmund Ho Hau-wah, Chief Executive Officer of Macao, at his personal residence. He extended a very warm welcome to the Canadians, saying how grateful he was that the delegation could meet with him. He expressed Macao's deepest appreciation towards Canada for the excellent bilateral relationship. The Chief Executive Officer noted that Canada is an important supplier of rib beef to Macao (Macao is the fourth largest market for Canadian rib beef) and that the market could expand even further. The discussion shifted to the economic potential offered by Macao to Canadian companies in such areas as environmental protection, waste management and environmental technologies. The Chief Executive Officer concluded by stating that Macao welcomes Canadian goods and urged Canadian companies to take advantage of investment opportunities offered by Macao.

The Canadian delegation thanked Mr. Ho Hau-wah for continuing the importation of Canadian beef during the difficult time resulting from the discovery of BSE in a Canadian cow, while all around him, countries were closing their borders to Canadian beef.

Hong Kong (Special Administrative Region)

On Monday, October 16th, Tom Wappel, Joint Chairman, held a meeting with Mrs. Cherry Tse, J.P., Permanent Secretary for Constitutional Affairs, Constitutional Affairs Bureau, Government Secretariat, Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. The purpose of the meeting was to receive a briefing and update on the selection process for the Legislature and Chief Executive as well as recent initiatives to modernize and democratize the process.

Mrs. Tse provided Mr. Wappel with numerous reference documents in this regard, (now filed with the Executive Secretary of the CCLA). She offered her continued cooperation should CCLA membership need further information or updates.

Conclusion

This was the first official visit by a multi Party Canadian Parliamentary delegation since the election of a new Government in Canada in 2006. The visit provided important opportunities to meet with high ranking officials, to discuss the evolving bilateral relationship between the two countries and examine ways of enhancing the friendship between parliamentarians while strengthening the mechanisms for exchanges which will promote a positive working dialogue.

Respectfully submitted,

Hon. Joseph Day, Senator
Co-Chair
Canada-China Legislative
Association

Mr. Tom Wappel, M.P.
Co-Chair
Canada-China Legislative
Association

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canada-China Legislative Association
ACTIVITY	9th Bilateral Meeting
DESTINATION	China (Beijing, Guangzhou, Macao, Hong Kong)
DATES	October 7-15, 2006
SENATORS	Hon. Joseph Day, Senator, Hon. Jack Austin, PC, QC, Senator, Hon. Pat Carney, PC, Senator
MEMBERS	Mr. Tom Wappel, MP, Mr. Gord Brown, MP, Hon. Charles Hubbard, PC, MP, Mr. Daryl Kramp, MP, Mr. Luc Malo, MP, Mr. John Maloney, MP, Mr. Bob Mills, MP
STAFF	Mr. Normand Radford, Acting Secretary
TRANSPORTATION	\$ 84,358.47
ACCOMMODATION	\$ 22,829.01
HOSPITALITY	\$ 822.61
PER DIEMS	\$ 3,902.72
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$ 969.87
MISCELLANEOUS/REGISTRATION FEES	\$ 873.92
TOTAL	\$ 113,756.60