

H & K Communications

72 Elvaston Avenue
Nepean, Ontario
K2G 3X9

Phone: (613) 829-1800
Fax: (613) 829-2449
E-mail: hturkow@rogers.com

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PRIME MINISTER'S MEDIA AVAILABILITY IN BEIJING

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Phone (613) 829-1800 Fax (613) 829-6181 E-mail hturkow@home.com

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TR. HON. STEPHEN HARPER (Premier ministre du Canada) : Bonsoir. Je tiens d'abord à remercier le Premier ministre Wen et le peuple chinois de nous avoir officiellement accueillis à Beijing, et aussi de l'hospitalité dont ils ont fait preuve ce soir.

Plus tôt aujourd'hui, le Premier ministre et moi avons tenu des discussions bilatérales très productives. Je suis heureux d'annoncer que le Canada a franchi un certain nombre d'étapes importantes pour renforcer son partenariat stratégique avec la Chine. Dans un premier temps, et c'est le plus important, le Canada et la Chine ont mené à bien les négociations concernant un accord sur la promotion et la protection des investissements étrangers. Il s'agit d'un accord que le gouvernement canadien a souhaité conclure depuis presque 20 ans. Cet accord constitue un pas en avant historique. Après son entrée en vigueur, l'accord fournira une plus grande prévisibilité et une plus grande protection aux Canadiens qui souhaitent faire du commerce en Chine. Nous avons aussi conclu des ententes sur le transport aérien, l'agriculture, la double imposition, l'énergie, et la science et la technologie. Notre gouvernement est satisfait des progrès réalisés aujourd'hui, et nous avons hâte de continuer à renforcer notre partenariat stratégique avec la Chine. Nous sommes aussi fiers de poursuivre un dialogue franc et respectueux sur les droits de la personne et la primauté du droit.

So I will repeat that. I'd like to begin by thanking Premier Wen and the Chinese people for formally welcoming us to Beijing and for their hospitality this evening.

Earlier today the Premier and I had very productive bilateral talks. I'm pleased to announce that Canada has reached a number of

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extremely important milestones in the development of our strategic partnership with China. First and most importantly, Canada and China have completed negotiations on a foreign investment promotion and protection agreement, an agreement Canadian governments have sought for almost 20 years. This agreement is an historic step forward. When implemented, it will provide greater predictability and protection for Canadians seeking to do business in China. We have also signed agreements dealing with air transportation, agriculture, double taxation, energy, and science and technology. Our government is pleased with the progress achieved today, and we look forward to continuing to strengthen our strategic partnership with China while of course also maintaining a frank and respectful dialogue on issues of human rights and the rule of law.

MODÉRATEUR : Donc le Premier ministre va maintenant prendre les questions des médias.

When I call your name, if you could please make your way to the microphone, which is on your right? We will start with David Lundgren from Reuters, please.

REPORTER: Prime Minister, good evening. Lai Changxing, who Canada deported to China, has basically vanished. Canadian officials have not been granted any access to him at all. So firstly, what were you able to establish about his conditions and his circumstances, and second, if you could tell us which consular cases you raised? Thank you.

RT. HON. STEPHEN HARPER: I raised a number of consular cases, and of course, many more have been raised by the Minister of Foreign Affairs with their officials, and obviously in the case that you raise,

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our officials continue to work with the government of China on that case, and we do have some agreements and protocols in place.

MODERATOR: Shirley Engel, Global.

REPORTER: Good evening, Prime Minister. As you know, the crisis in Syria continues to grow worse each day. You're the first western leader to meet with the Chinese leader since they joined Russia in vetoing the UN Security Council resolution. We know that you raised the issue with Premier Wen today, so I'm hoping you could tell us what you told him, and what was the response?

RT. HON. STEPHEN HARPER: Well, first of all, it's never my habit to discuss what other people say in a private meeting, but obviously I raised in very clear and strong terms Canada's position on this issue. I think that position is very well known, and we would hope to see in the future action from the Security Council on this matter. And I was pretty clear on that.

MODÉRATEUR : On va continuer avec Marc Godbout de Radio-Canada.

JOURNALISTE : Bonjour, Monsieur Harper. En diplomatie, tout est dans le choix des mots, et sur la question de la Syrie, est-ce que lors de votre tête à tête avec le Premier ministre chinois, vous avez condamné le geste de la Chine sur le veto de la semaine dernière, et d'autre part, compte tenu des événements qui sont en développement en ce moment de l'état de la situation, est-ce que vous avez l'intention de demander le retour de l'ambassadeur au Canada?

TR. HON. STEPHEN HARPER : J'ai demandé d'une façon très claire la position du Canada à cet égard, et j'ai surtout exprimé notre

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position envers une action du Conseil de sécurité des Nations Unies. Pour le cas de notre ambassadeur, nous avons là dans notre ambassade un petit nombre d'employés jusqu'à maintenant. Ils sont là pour faire des fonctions nécessaires, mais évidemment, nous regardons avec beaucoup d'attention la situation jour par jour, et nous continuons à conseiller des Canadiens de quitter le pays aussi vite que possible.

MODERATOR: Mark McKinnon from the Globe and Mail.

REPORTER: Good evening. I'd like to ask you about the FIPA agreement you signed today. First of all, does it cover all industries? And second of all, given that China is already bound by the rules of the World Trade Organization, and yet we have all the problems that you're aware of in terms of foreign investors doing business here, why would... is it reasonable to expect that an extra piece of paper is going to make substantive difference on the ground in sort of further flung regions of China, where their problems are at the local level?

RT. HON. STEPHEN HARPER: First of all, yes, it is absolutely an expectation that it would make a practical difference going forward. In terms of what it covers, the agreement is comprehensive, but the agreement does not override existing Canadian law in regard to foreign investment and foreign investment review. Those laws remain in place. But what the agreement, what a foreign investment promotion and protection agreement does is it ensures non-discriminatory treatment in terms of national firms in application of the law, and it also provides addition dispute settlement mechanisms in the event of difficulty. I think this will make a very practical difference. On top of that, if you don't mind me saying, we have... you know, I

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think a pretty open regime when it comes to Chinese investment in Canada, and I've obviously raised even beyond the foreign investment, protection and promotion agreement, I've raised with the Chinese certain cases where we're concerned about non-approval of existing investments by Canadians in China, and that we expect to see even-handedness on this going forward, and look, my sense is the willingness of the Chinese to conclude this agreement indicates to me that they do put increasing strategic importance on two-way investment between our countries.

MODERATOR: Jason Faquette, PostMedia News.

REPORTER: Prime Minister, good evening. I wonder if you could address a little bit the relationship between Canada and China, and how it seems to have grown. It seems to be in a bit of a warming trend, and not just on economic or tourism numbers, but maybe on a personal level. Because I know Premier Wen had said you waited too long coming here back in 2009. I'm wondering how that's developed, and maybe give us some helpful examples, if you could, of how the relationship is warming, particularly between yourself and the Chinese leadership.

RT. HON. STEPHEN HARPER: Well, you know, I would say this, and I think I've said this before: there was a view when we took office that you either had to deal with the Chinese on economics, or to deal with them on human rights and consular matters, but you couldn't do both. And we refused to accept that view. We thought that was a view that was driven, frankly, out of a weak approach to foreign policy. China and Canada have important relations and important economic relations, and the reason we have those important economic relations is because they are mutually beneficial to both sides. And as you know, China does a significant amount of

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business in Canada, just as we wish to do more there, and so my view has always been that as long as you're frank and respectful, it is in fact necessary to engage China as we would engage every other country on the entire range of issues. I think that the Chinese have gotten more comfortable with that position as we've gone forward, and I think we are beginning to achieve things, if you look at what has happened over the past few years, in terms of – let me just give two examples, and then I'm sure we'll be able to give more as we go forward. But just two big examples: approved us the nation status, and a foreign investment protection promotion agreement. These are major things that previous government were seeking, were never able to achieve. In the FIPA we have concluded today, we have for the first time a comprehensive economic agreement with China. So my view continues to be that it is necessary and possible and necessary to raise with the Chinese a full range of issues as part of a frank and productive relationship. And I think the Chinese are themselves increasingly comfortable with that, and increasingly comfortable with this government's style, even if it means from time to time we do raise things and we do have discussions, as we did today, both discussions on issues where we're fully engaged and fully cooperating, as well as some pretty frank discussions on issues where we do not agree.

MODÉRATEUR : Et on va terminer avec Raymond Fillion de TVA.

JOURNALISTE : Bonjour Monsieur Harper. J'aimerais vous entendre en français sur le changement de ton. Vous avez eu droit en 2009 lors de votre première visite ici à des reproches publiques de Monsieur Wen. À quel point le ton a changé, selon vous, depuis votre dernière visite, et

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d'autre part, la Chine veut être inclut dans le Conseil de l'Arctique. Selon vous, quel mot la Chine doit avoir dans tous les dossiers touchant l'Arctique?

TR. HON. STEPHEN HARPER : Pour la première question, notre approche depuis le début est claire. Nous croyons que c'est nécessaire avec la Chine, comme n'importe quel autre pays, d'avoir un dialogue franc sur tous les dossiers, les dossiers où nous sommes d'accord, et nous pouvons faire des progrès, mais aussi sur des dossiers où nous sommes en désaccord. Et évidemment c'est un changement pour le Canada. La philosophie du gouvernement précédent était que c'est nécessaire de choisir, et nous avons des relations économiques qui sont... qui ont toute l'importance, et c'est nécessaire d'ignorer d'autres choses. À mon avis, ce n'est pas nécessaire ou réaliste. Notre relation avec la Chine, notre relation économique est importante pour nous deux. Et ça ne défend pas la nécessité d'exprimer notre opinion sur tous les dossiers, pas seulement les dossiers, comme j'ai dit au commencement de la réunion, les dossiers économiques et culturels, mais aussi les questions de la paix et la sécurité internationale où nous sommes de temps en temps sur des côtés différentes, et aussi sur des droits de la personne. Et avec cette approche, malgré les prédictions au commencement de notre arrivée en fonction que ça ne sera pas une réussite, la réalité est que sous notre gouvernement, nous avons fait des étapes majeures. Nous avons reçu le statut de... le destiné approuvé pour la première fois. Nous avons, aujourd'hui nous avons conclu des négociations sur la première entente économique majeure entre nos deux pays, l'entente sur la promotion et la protection des investissements étrangers, et je suis confiant qu'on va continuer à cet égard en soulevant régulièrement des questions nous sommes en désaccord.

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Pour la question de l'Arctique... évidemment je respecte toujours les intérêts des autres. La base de notre politique dans l'Arctique est la protection et la promotion de notre souveraineté, la souveraineté canadienne sur le territoire canadien. Merci, tout le monde.

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