

Are Human Rights Bad for Business with China?

The facts just don't add up.

In 1997, under pressure from the Chinese government and Canada's business community, the Canadian government ended public criticism of China's human rights violations. Instead, Canada engaged in "quiet diplomacy" and began a series of bilateral human rights dialogues with China.

Did this behind-the-scenes approach improve trade?

1997: Canada had a 1.41% share of the market for total imports into China.

2003: Canada's market share of imports into China dropped to 1.06%.

2006: Canada's market share of imports into China fell to a low of 0.97%

Not only did "quiet diplomacy" fail to increase Canada's share of China's imports, it also did little to improve China's human rights record. In 2006 the bilateral human rights dialogue was discontinued.

2008: Canada's share of imports into China increased to 1.12%.

Despite Canada's renewed public condemnation of China's human rights record, Canada's share of imports into China increased.

Does pressing China on human rights mean that Canada's trade with China will suffer? In short, the answer is no.

"I don't think Canadians want us to sell out important Canadian values—our belief in democracy, freedom, human rights. They don't want to sell that out to the almighty dollar"
Prime Minister Harper.
November 2006.

Call on Prime Minister Harper to continue to press for human rights in China.

Take action at: www.amnesty.ca/china



Canadian Coalition
on Human Rights in China

Coalition Canadienne
pour les droits humains en Chine