



Tiananmen Square, 1989

When do you draw the line?

Doing business in China ethically



environment

control

labour rights

abuse

"Canada will not stand idly by while this struggle for democracy and human rights goes on."
Rt. Hon. John Turner, 1989

Do you stand idly by?

“We do not have to camouflage our differences (with China). Nor do we have to “go along or kowtow to get along.” That is a juvenile concept that has nothing to do with fundamental foreign policy analysis. A more adult approach to the relationship by both countries would allow for honest disagreements on issues such as human rights.”

Derek Burney is a former Canadian ambassador to the United States and senior research fellow for the Canadian Defence and Foreign Affairs Institute.

Too often some Canadian business leaders argue that trade should come before all else, even our values. It's an argument frequently heard in regards to our relations with China. But China isn't just a source of cheap products. It's one of the world's most authoritarian regimes where the rights of its citizens take second place to the will of its leaders, often at a tragic cost.

Yet, human rights and economic development are not either/or issues. They're interrelated and interdependent and are as much about legal obligations between a country and its citizens, as they are about economic development. In fact, the promotion and protection of human rights is good for business, because free societies are consistently the most innovative and competitive.

Throughout history when indifference threatened our values, corporate leaders were asked to make tough choices. They were not always easy decisions. There may even have been a cost. But they were the right choices, because compromising our values is simply not the Canadian way.

Canadian companies have much to gain in China. They also have much to lose. Whether it's the loss of consumer confidence at home, goodwill or market capitalization, there's a price to pay when a company is even indirectly linked to the abuse of human rights.

The Canada Tibet Committee supports a cohesive, multifaceted approach to Canada's relations with China, where government, business, and even ordinary Canadians have a role to play. We envision a relationship where we won't need to jettison our values as we pursue new economic opportunities, because both countries will appreciate that sustainable relations are built on mutual trust and respect.



Pol Pot, Khmer Rouge



Robert Mugabe



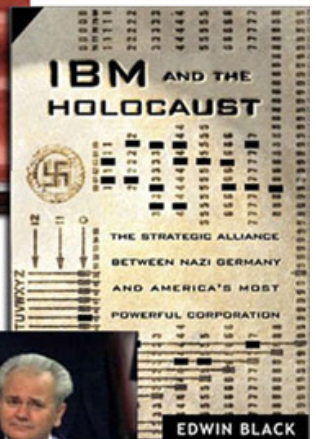
Kim Jong il



Rwanda



Slobodan Milosevic



Corporate Canada can play its part

There's a belief that an adversarial relationship must exist between business and human rights advocates, but perception doesn't have to be reality.

Canadian companies can play an important role in advancing universal human rights in China, while developing new economic opportunities. Human rights and trade are not mutually exclusive.

The Canada Tibet Committee believes that a free, prosperous China is in Canada's interests. Even more importantly, it's in the interests of Chinese citizens.

But ultimately the choice is yours: to draw a line or be a bystander.



Together we can be ambassadors for human rights. The act may be small, but its consequences great.

Contact us today to discuss what you can do to help defend human rights in China.

“It is often argued that organizations that deal with economic development should avoid human rights issues because the two topics are distinct. This argument holds true only if people see human rights as strictly legal obligations. A deeper analysis shows that human rights are highly correlated with economic development and are often precursors for it.”

Alfredo Sfeir-Younis is the President and Founder of The Zambuling Institute for Human Transformation, and former Senior Adviser to the Managing Directors of the World Bank.

**So when do you draw the line?
Before it's too late.**



Aftermath of a 2008 protest in Tibet.

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