

Freedom, Hong Kong, Taiwan ... and Canada

Peter Vogel

Deputy Leader, CHP Canada

Leonard Cohen famously sang “First we take Manhattan, then we take Berlin.” The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) could re-write this as “First we take Hong Kong, then we take Taiwan.” The problem is, under today’s leadership, Canada would be singing along.

Canada recognized China’s “One China Policy” in 1970¹—guess who was Prime Minister at that time? (Answer: Trudeau Sr.) Acknowledgement of this policy on the world stage, including the UN, was the beginning of the end for Taiwan’s independence. Thankfully, the Taiwanese have not given up and are not yet officially part of China. Hong Kong, however, serves as a warning for what is next.

Canada needs to take a stand for freedom—for Canadians in Canada (and China), and also for the good of the citizens of Hong Kong, Taiwan, and other countries that are geographically close to and immediately endangered by the CCP’s aggressive plans. The problem is, Canada’s relations with China are easily strained; a non-binding motion, which passed in Parliament last week, called Taiwan’s President, Tsai Ing-wen, a “well-respected international leader, female president of Taiwan and a strong global advocate for democracy.”² This earned Canada a harsh reproof from China.

Countries such as Taiwan, South Korea, the Philippines, Japan, and—while it is no longer separate from China—Hong Kong, need to form an alliance of mutual protection in the face of Chinese expansion (and North Korean aggression). It would help if India, Singapore, Indonesia, Thailand, and even Pakistan were also part of this group. Not that it would be easy for each of these vastly different countries with historic differences and grievances to suddenly start working together, but it is increasingly necessary. China is not sitting still; it has plans to expand its empire,³ and has already been doing so. Politics makes strange bedfellows, and if these countries wish to maintain their independence, they must stand together in spite of issues in their past.

How are the affairs of Asia any of Canada’s business? The ideas of freedom and democracy for Hong Kong and Taiwan are important, and that alone would be reason to try to help those on the brink of losing them, but there is also a more practical reason for Canada to be involved. What many Canadians might not realize is that there are Canadian citizens living in Hong Kong—and not just a few either. Around 300,000⁴ Canadian citizens reside in Hong Kong, but for how much longer? What will Canada’s government do if the (already bad) situation turns worse? Would Canada have the willpower and logistical strength to extricate them and get them safely to Canada? The fact that the “Two Michaels” are still imprisoned in China does not present a hopeful outlook.

But what of the situation in Hong Kong? How bad is it really? China does not respect the “One Country, Two Systems” Declaration,⁵ signed in 1997, and this is starting to show: how they treated a man named Jimmy Lai sheds light on China’s intentions. He has been arrested several times now⁶ because he continues to take action for freedom and democracy in Hong Kong. He is rich and influential, a “media mogul,”⁷ but even a man of his stature is not immune and will have to fight for his own freedom in the courts before he can return to the struggle for his country.

Another example is Nathan Law, an elected legislator⁸ in Hong Kong—except he is no longer in Hong Kong, he is in Great Britain—a political refugee who was fortunate enough to flee. He was previously imprisoned and attacked for his support of freedom and democracy for Hong Kong.

When these two men were arrested or fled from the CCP, they had enough profile to be noticed by the international press—but what about the average citizen who grew up in a free democracy that is now being taken over by a

communist regime? They will face the same consequences or worse without their story being told. Or, for those who are Canadians, could they appeal for help and hopefully be extradited—if Canada’s government has the will and strength to do so? But again, the lack of commitment from our government to the return of the “Two Michaels” is worrisome. We are grateful for the countries that took a stand for freedom and due process and sought their release during their trial in China, but our own ambassador was not even present.⁹

These examples of people standing up for freedom of speech and democracy also serve as a lesson to Canada in another way; they should make us think about our own freedoms, and what direction they are headed. Freedom of speech is being threatened again under the guise of tackling ‘hate speech’¹⁰ through Bill C-10. While hate is a sin and speaking/writing hateful things is morally wrong, the question of who defines what is and what is not ‘hateful’ is what we have to ask; will it be our current Liberal government and the bureaucrats whom they appoint? Will the standard of what constitutes hate speech be unchanging and consistently applied? There is good reason to be concerned that this bill would put a chill on the discussion of controversial topics,¹¹ and that is not the direction we want to go.

No, we’re not in the same predicament as Hong Kong—yet, but we are also not headed in the right direction. Canada needs to take a bold stand for freedom at home and abroad. It should start at home by reenforcing instead of diminishing free speech, and then recognize and aid the plight of those living in Hong Kong and Taiwan abroad.

Strong, principled diplomacy is needed; Canada must not continue to bend to the CCP’s demands and ambitions. We must stand with Hong Kong, Taiwan, and other jurisdictions that are being threatened by the rise of totalitarianism. Canada must stop deliberately looking the other way and no longer acknowledge the “One China” policy.

You can take action too; please sign this petition¹² against Bill C-10.

While you have your freedom of speech, use it to get involved politically by helping in campaigns and joining the CHP.¹³

Footnotes

¹ www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-38285354

² www.politico.com/news/2021/04/15/china-canada-taiwan-award-481912

³ www.forbes.com/sites/johnmauldin/2019/11/12/chinas-grand-plan-to-take-over-the-world/?sh=43c4d8195ab5

⁴ www.ctvnews.ca/politics/freeland-says-canadians-in-hong-kong-are-very-very-welcome-to-come-home-1.4967633?cache=tzbrsjtr

⁵ www.history.com/news/hong-kong-china-great-britain

⁶ www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-56770567

⁷ nationalpost.com/news/world/pro-democracy-media-mogul-jimmy-lai-arrested-in-hong-kong

⁸ www.macdonaldlaurier.ca/fled-hong-kong-nathan-law-spectator/

⁹ globalnews.ca/video/7711923/conservatives-ask-why-canadas-ambassador-to-china-not-present-during-2-michaels-trials-in-beijing

¹⁰ nationalpost.com/news/politics/new-definition-of-hate-to-be-included-in-liberal-bill-that-might-also-revive-contentious-hate-speech-law

¹¹ ipolitics.ca/2021/01/29/regulation-of-online-hate-speech-coming-soon-says-minister/

¹² www.campaignlifecoalition.com/action-alert-emails?vsrc=%252fcampaigns%252f83962%252frespond

¹³ www.chp.ca/get-involved/

The Christian Heritage Party of Canada

www.chp.ca • NationalOffice@chp.ca • 1-888-VOTE-CHP (868-3247)

PO Box 4958, Station E, Ottawa, Ontario K1S 5J1

This Communiqué may be copied
