

SENATE



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The Honourable Leo Housakos
Senator

L'honorable Leo Housakos
Sénateur

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau
Prime Minister of Canada
Office of the Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0A2

September 30, 2021

Dear Prime Minister,

The recent decision by the People's Republic of China to end the unlawful detentions of Michael Spavor and Michael Kovrig continues to be a source of great joy for all Canadians. We are immensely relieved that they are back home in Canada and hope for nothing but the best for both men as they adjust to the realities of what happened to them and their lives moving forward.

However, with their release, in what can only be described as "hostage diplomacy" at its absolute worst, it is time for Canada to reevaluate and recalibrate its relationship with the communist regime of China.

Canada can no longer continue to compromise the values on which this great nation was built in pursuit of cheap goods and markets for our own goods and produce. We must instead put greater emphasis on forging new and strengthening existing trade relationships with nations with whom we are more ideologically aligned.

And there is no greater opportunity right now than the one before us with Taiwan's application to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership.

Taiwan has long been subject to Beijing's efforts of diplomatic isolation, which have seen it excluded from participation in various multilateral organizations and events, despite having continuously demonstrated its capability and readiness to make valuable contributions to the international community.

China's own recent application to join the CPTPP is yet another attempt to bully and isolate Taiwan by seeking to intimidate member states.

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However, rather than capitulate to this intimidation, as a member of the CPTPP Canada should seize this moment to take a principled stand by supporting Taiwan's application.

This is an opportunity for your government to show courage and moral leadership, domestically and internationally; to place a premium on engaging in trade with a democratic country that values human rights, freedom and rule of law versus the "basic dictatorship" that is the communist regime of China.

Taiwan is not only a beacon of democracy in the region but also shares Canada's commitment to fighting climate change, protecting workers' rights, protecting intellectual property, reducing poverty, and driving sustainable growth.

In recent public consultations conducted by Global Affairs, Canadians ranked Taiwan second behind only Thailand as a potential candidate for expansion of the CPTPP. I believe this shows a desire by Canadians themselves to put our values, to put who we profess to be as a nation, ahead of the pursuit of cheap goods.

We must start prioritizing these shared values and principles in determining our trade partners and agreements.

Furthermore, we must protect our vital interests. We must incorporate the imperative of securing peace in the Eastern Pacific.

China has engaged in a steady increase in pressure and military threats against the people of Taiwan. It is also engaged in a major and relentless military build-up. It is crucial that Canada, along with other democratic nations, clearly indicate that any contemplation of the use of force to resolve its dispute with Taiwan is not only unacceptable but threatens international peace.

A clear indication that Canada supports the admission of Taiwan to the CPTPP would send a signal that the people of Taiwan are an integral part of the international community; that they have the right to live in peace and security.

I therefore urge you to consider such an initiative as an imperative for global peace.

We can no longer carry on with a policy of appeasement toward China, which will only lead to an emboldened CCP, a further dilution of Canadian principles, and an even further decline in the esteem of our allies and the international community at large.

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So today, I am calling on you and your government to publicly express support for Taiwan's application for inclusion in the CPTPP. And further, to express to Canadians your commitment to pursuing and strengthening existing trade relations with countries, like Taiwan, who share our values and principles.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Leo Housakos".

The Honourable Leo Housakos

Cc: The Honourable Marc Garneau, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Canada
The Honourable Mary Ng, Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade