

GLOBAL FRIDAY PRESENTS

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DEMOCRATIZATION, FREE TRADE, AND POLITICAL REFORM IN CHINA: PROSPECTS, PROBLEMS, AND CANADA'S ROLE?

China continues to be regarded as a repressive dictatorial regime. However, it appears to be on a developmental trajectory similar to the one taken by several liberal democratic states (including Canada and the United States). Indeed, Beijing's softening stance on certain types of civil unrest, commitment to 'free' trade, mild political reforms, and income redistribution programs indicate that the leadership is modifying some of its coercive and inward looking tendencies. Furthermore, China's burgeoning middle class and warm embrace of certain elements of Western culture and modernity suggest that the country is gradually transitioning away from the violent strategies that characterized Chinese politics under Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping. Can Canada accelerate the current rate of political change in China? This presentation argues that Canada has several foreign policy instruments at its disposal that can be put to much better use. Specifically, formalizing a more robust trade agreement with Beijing and substantially increasing poverty reduction and/or legal aid grants will help to improve political conditions in the country's rural and urban areas.

Date: March 11, 2011 Time: 12:00—1:30 pm
Place: Senate, 1079

