

# Confucius Institute unwelcome at university, says prof

BY MATTHEW LITTLE  
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Faculty at the University of Manitoba are concerned their school could become the latest host for a Confucius Institute, a non-profit Chinese language and culture institution funded with the helping hand of the Chinese regime.

Canada is already host to several Confucius Institutes, including one at University of Waterloo where one instructor rallied her students to work together and fight Canadian media's coverage of the paramilitary effort to crush Tibetan unrest just months before the Beijing Olympic Games.

Prof. Cameron Morrill, president of the U of M Faculty Association, says the union is strongly opposed to having a CI on campus, a sentiment echoed by Asian studies Prof. Terry Russell in the following Q & A.

## What is your primary concern with the Confucius Institute?

As an academic who believes in the importance of maintaining academic autonomy and freedom, the CI represents a very direct and serious threat. In the first place, the CI is an agency directly operated by the Beijing government (as part of the Ministry of Education). It is not an arms-length cultural agency like Alliance Française

or the Goethe Institute. Because the CIs are generally located on the campuses of universities, and operate under the aegis of universities, this implies that the Chinese government is in effect offering courses on Chinese culture and history with the blessing of the Canadian universities involved.

This is a situation without precedent in Canada, so far as I am aware. Foreign governments often provide funding to universities to support the teaching of their national culture and language, but this is traditionally in the form of grants to existing academic programs with few, if any, strings attached.

To me, and I believe many other Canadian academics, it does not matter which government might be involved, whether it be Finland or Brazil or China, national governments should not be given the means and opportunity to disseminate their version of national history and culture under the aegis of an institution that is mandated to pursue independent and unbiased research.

The Chinese government all too obviously has a particularly distorted version of Chinese culture and history that it wishes the present to the world.

The CI gives Beijing the opportunity to tell its story within the legitimizing framework of foreign universities. This is a brilliant way

of serving up a poorly disguised form of propaganda to the young Canadians who attend our universities and colleges. It also serves the purpose of limiting the ability of other voices to tell a different story. That is not what universities in Canada are about.

## This is a brilliant way of serving up a poorly disguised form of propaganda to the young Canadians who attend our universities and colleges.

PROF. TERRY RUSSELL

## What impact do you think they will have on the university and its students, Chinese and otherwise?

It is difficult to know the exact impact of a given CI on a particular university and its students. It depends how large the CI is and what kind of courses they are able to teach, as well as what other programs they develop. Obviously, if the CI represents "China" or "Chineseness" on a campus, there will be a strong tendency to accept what it offers as the source of information about the legitimate

and true state of affairs about Chinese national issues and Chinese culture in general. This is clearly not a good situation for those who take issue with the official Beijing version of China and Chineseness.

For example, the CI will and must (according to its own stat-

igious freedom.

But if the CI on campus presents the government's falsehoods as incontestable truth, students and the university community in general will be forced to accept them as true, or at least remain silent lest they offend the CI personnel (who might decide to leave and take their money with them).

## What should be done about China's efforts to expand its network of Confucius Institutes? Is there a role for government in this?

Recently the Government of India placed a blanket ban on the establishments of Confucius Institutes in that country. The reason being that they simply were not comfortable with the relationship that exists between the two countries, especially considering that China still has ongoing territorial disputes with India.

India is currently seeking to expand its expertise in Chinese language and culture, but they are doing it through their own governmental and academic structures. I would be overjoyed if the Canadian government adopted a similar policy on the CIs.

There is ample reason to believe that China has less than wholesome intentions with regard to Canadian politics, technology, defence strategy, and business. Why would they be spending so

much time hacking into sensitive computer networks and courting political and business officials if they were hoping for a completely friendly and transparent relationship with us?

We could say that individual universities should realize the consequences of signing on with the Chinese government, but it is very difficult for university administrations to turn down the money and opportunities offered by the CI. Particularly at universities and colleges that do not have strong Chinese studies programs, the CI looks like a gift from heaven because it seems to promise instant credibility in the area of China relations, something that administrators are under pressure to develop.

So, to a certain extent, we cannot expect universities to have the willpower to turn down the CI, its money and resources, on the grounds of morality and integrity. For that reason, it would be extremely helpful if the federal government, or provincial governments, would step in and defend Canadian academic integrity, not to mention technology and trade secrets, by disallowing the Chinese government, or any other government, from establishing what amounts to propaganda—and potentially intelligence gathering agencies—on our campuses.

# Controlled flood proceeding as planned in Manitoba

BY JOAN DELANEY  
EPOCH TIMES STAFF

With unprecedented floods plaguing Manitoba, the controlled breach of a flood dike on the surging Assiniboine River is so far going according to plan and has slowed the rate of the river's rise downstream.

Although more water is coming down the Assiniboine River, water levels downstream of the 30-metre wide breach near Portage la Prairie have not risen, according to the province's latest flood bulletin.

"The area affected by the controlled spill has been reduced from 225 square kilometres to 180 square kilometres," the bulletin said Wednesday, adding that the water is dispersing slowly across fields and spilling at low points.

The deliberate breach is designed to relieve pressure on the Assiniboine dikes which are under heavy stress from record river flows, and protect the hundreds of homes that would be inundated if the dikes let go.

The river is estimated to crest at Portage La Prairie sometime this week. After that, the water will be more predictable and the floods will slowly begin to subside.

However, the water is expected to remain high for some time.

Doug Connery, owner of Connery's Riverdale Farms near Hoop and Holler Bend where the breach site is located, says it looks like much of the land he and his neighbours thought would be flooded will "escape the big disaster" now.

"A week ago it sounded like everything was going to be under water, and then as time went on and the government was able to tell us a little bit more, that got downgraded," he says.

"Depending on how much water they were going to put down the controlled release, we didn't know how much of our land was going to flood. Now it looks like they might not have to put water down any more, and if they don't then I think we're going to be OK."

If conditions continue to improve, the dike breach could be closed by the weekend, reports the Winnipeg Free Press.

The breach was estimated to put about 150 homes at risk. The province is developing a special program to provide comprehensive compensation for homeowners and producers affected by the planned flood.

Connery, whose farm spans

1,200 acres, says if the controlled flood remains at current levels, he'll be able to get on with working the higher land. However, there's some land he's not going to be able to farm at all this year because of the river height.

"Some of that water is seeping into the land through underneath the dikes, because it's so close to the dikes that you get water that infiltrates back in underground. So we're still going to have some land that we're not going to be able to farm this year, that's for sure, but it's not to the huge extent that it looked like before."

Emergency Measures Organization Minister Steve Ashton told the Manitoba legislature on Monday that 1,500 Canadian Forces personnel are working in the area of the breach and along the Assiniboine River to ensure the dikes hold, according to the Winnipeg Free Press.

This year, the province's two major river systems, the Red River and the Assiniboine, overflowed their banks. The Assiniboine broke its own height record of 359.66 metres above sea level set back in 1923. Ashton said Lake Manitoba is at its highest in 50 years.

About 3,600 Manitobans have been displaced by flooding.

# Harper's cabinet mixes new blood with old

HARPER CONTINUED FROM A1  
Labrador Innu Peter Penashue, former president of the Innu Nation, will be Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada. Penashue won the Conservatives' only seat in Newfoundland and Labrador where the Liberals retain a remaining strong hold. The post was previously held by Quebec MP Josée Verner who failed to get re-elected but was rewarded with an immediate appointment to the Senate.

Bal Gosal, who grabbed the Mississauga, Ont. Riding of Bramalea-Gore-Malton from the Liberals after an 18-year run by Liberal Gurbax Malhi, was named Minister of State (Sport).

Ed Fast, MP for Abbotsford, B.C., makes it to cabinet for the first time since being elected in 2006 as the Minister of International Trade and the Asia Pacific gateway.

Rookie Chris Alexander, widely seen as a prominent candidate for cabinet, was overlooked. The 42-year-old former ambassador to Afghanistan is regarded as a well-spoken, intelligent man who performed well in his diplomatic career.

In Quebec, where a wave of NDP orange decimated the Bloc Quebe-

cois but also took seats from Liberals and Conservatives, Harper put four out of five MPs from that province in cabinet, including

## It will hit the ground running.

PRIME MINISTER STEPHEN HARPER  
ON HIS NEW CABINET

Maxime Bernier as Minister of State (Small Business and Tourism), Stephen Blaney as Minister of Veterans Affairs, Christian Paradis Minister of Industry, and Denis Lebel will be Minister of Transport.

Harper said his new cabinet would keep Canada moving towards greater security and stability.

"The new Ministry is fundamentally about stability and continuity. It represents the right mix of experience and new blood. It is the right group of men and women to lead the job of keeping Canada moving forward towards greater prosperity," he said.

"The new Cabinet team has strong representation from all regions, and it will hit the ground

running."

National Inuit leader Mary Simon lauded the historic appointment of two aboriginal

cabinet ministers.

"I am delighted to see my fellow Inuit leader, the Honourable Leona Aglukkaq, continue in her role as the Minister of Health, and take on the role of Minister of the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency," said Simon in a release.

She also applauded Penashue's appointment.

In a move the NDP are slamming as undemocratic, besides appointing Verner, the PM returned two former senators who had failed in their bid to join the lower house back to the Senate. Previous senators Larry Smith and Fabian Manning had left the red chamber to try for the House of Commons but failed to get elected.



A helicopter water bomber drops water on a spot-fire near Slave Lake.

# Alberta wildfires leave thousands displaced

## Still unsafe for Slave Lake residents to return home

WILDFIRES CONTINUED FROM A1  
"I want to go home and see what the fire has done to the community...yet I don't. I want to see for myself how it is. I see it on the news, the computer, but I want to see it myself," she said.

Most roads in and around the town remain closed, however, and evacuees are being told its not yet safe to go home as crews continue to put out fire flare-ups and clear widespread destruction. Air quality has significantly deteriorated and water bans remain in effect for the region. Electricity and gas are also not available.

Eighty-seven wildfires are presently raging in Alberta, 23 of which are out of control. Approximately 191,000 hectares have burned. In the Lesser Slave Lake area alone, 17 wildfires are burning out of control. The fires have closed down many roads, rail, and oil operations across northern Alberta.

In addition to Slave Lake, mandatory evacuation orders are in place for Loon River First Nation, Red Earth Creek, Woodland Cree First Nation, and parts of the Municipal District of Lesser Slave River. Northern Sunrise County has issued evacuation advisories for Little Buffalo and Marten Lake.

Bob Boudreau, who was evacuated from Red Earth, says it's the worst disaster he's ever seen.

"It's unbelievable. Thank God nobody got hurt. Everybody's alive, everybody's together. Material things can be replaced, lives cannot."

Alberta has deployed approximately 1,000 firefighters, including 120 who arrived Monday from British Columbia. The province has also deployed 124 helicopters, 20 air tankers, and scores of heavy ground-based machines. Around 85 firefighters from Ontario and 200 additional firefighters from

B.C. have arrived in Alberta and are preparing to be deployed.

"It has been heart-wrenching to see how quickly this wildfire moved and the effect it's had on our community," Slave Lake Mayor Karina Pillay-Kinnee said in a press release.

"It won't be safe until critical infrastructure like water, power, gas, telecommunications and health services are in place ... and the risk of fire is diminished."

"As soon as the risk is gone and the infrastructure is in place, we can begin getting people back into the community."

Pillay-Kinnee visited temporary shelters on Wednesday to speak with displaced residents.

Alberta Premier Ed Stelmach announced Wednesday that the province has approved an initial allocation of \$50 million toward the immediate needs of the evacuees and the rebuilding of Slave Lake and surrounding communities.

"The unprecedented wildfire disaster in Slave Lake and the surrounding area has touched all Albertans. This funding is an important first step on the road to rebuilding the community," he said.

The funding will initially focus on the immediate housing, income support, and other needs of the evacuated residents.