

Comment by Michael C H Jones

Recently I received an inquiry from a NSW Department of Education senior public servant concerning a proposal to establish Confucius Institutes in the High Schools of New South Wales - no doubt similar proposals have been made to other States of Australia.

The following was my response:

From: m.jones@accci.com.au
To:
Subject: Global Confucius Institutes

Dear

In reference to your past inquiry concerning Confucius Institutes at Sydney University and other universities throughout Australia and in the context of their expansion to High Schools in NSW I pass on the following information which your own research may have already discovered.

There is an Annual Conference of Confucius Institutes held in China - the 5th Conference since 2006 was held in the China National Convention Centre (CNCC) in Beijing over two days from the evening of 10th December 2010.

Chinese Communist Party Politburo Standing Committee Member Li Changchun, the Propaganda Chief - google him, presented the Awards at the Opening Ceremony to both domestic and international attendees encouraging all to promote cultural and educational exchanges and cooperation between China and foreign countries.

Also delivering a speech at the Opening Ceremony was Liu Yandong, Politburo member, State Councillor and Chairman of the Council of the Confucius Institute Headquarters in Beijing - google her.

The 5th Conference participants included 1,400 University Presidents and Representatives of Confucius Institutes from 96 countries and regions. The theme focused on the sustainable development of Confucius Institutes worldwide. Activities included Principals' Forum, Presidents' Forum and an Exhibition of International Chinese teaching materials.

There was a special forum on cooperation between Confucius Institutes and business enterprises around the world with emphasis on a "win-win model" - buy western businessmen.

Invitations to attend were issued by the Office of Chinese Language and Culture in Beijing. Multi-million dollar donations were made from companies all over the world including "entrepreneurs" in Australia - for example South Australian Chinese community business representatives including Professor Gao Mobo, President of the Confucius Institute at Adelaide University.

Bottom line is that the Confucius Institutes are an exercise in "soft power" out of Beijing basically to counter EU and US cultural influence around the world. There is no control of whom they send overseas, many of whom are intelligence people, who use these organisations for non-educational purposes - no different to AMCHAM or other western business "associations" since the Second World War. Whatever precedents the West has set China will follow and perhaps in the near term do it as

well or better given their State run political system and global SOE.

I hope this helps your thinking? If you come up with a solution to this Chinese global onslaught please advise.

Michael C H Jones
President - ACCCI