



China and Canadian Official Development Assistance: Reassessing the Relationship

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Introduction

Well-known Canadian comedian, Rick Mercer, now of the *Rick Mercer Report*, but best appreciated by Canadians during his time on CBC's *This Hour Has 22 Minutes*, perhaps put it best for most of his countrymen when, during one of his patented "rants," he emphasized:

There's no doubt about it; Canadians support the idea of foreign aid. We are a First World nation – it's part of our job. But at the risk of sounding like a moron, what the hell are we sending money to China for? China has one of the largest economies on earth and we're sending them \$60 million a year in foreign aid. This is a country that might as well own the trademark on the phrase "emerging superpower." ... Wouldn't our \$60 million in aid be better off going to Sudan – which, you know, doesn't have a space program? Because as it stands now, I don't know what the Chinese word for "sucker" is, but I bet when Canada comes up in conversation, that word gets used a lot.¹

Mercer's perspective is lent credence by statistics and interpretations offered in any of the hundreds, if not thousands, of books now being published on the China "phenomenon." For example, the BBC's Duncan Hewitt in *Getting Rich First: Life in a Changing China*, notes that sales of passenger cars in the country has quadrupled during the half decade from 2001, to about five million.² Peter Engardio, *Business Week's* former Asia correspondent, points out that China is the world's biggest cell phone markets with more than 350 million subscribers; China and India produce 500,000 new engineers a year, as compared with 70,000 in the United States; and, this year, the value of Chinese exports is expected to surpass the US\$1 trillion mark, although that may be off slightly given present American domestic problems.³ And so the list of statistics, growth and change rushes on.

Moreover, the issue of aid to China, is being raised more often than not among the international donor community and various governments, especially since in November 2006 China's foreign exchange reserves broke through the US\$1 trillion mark and now hover in the vicinity of US\$1.7 trillion. Some multilateral aid agencies and countries have adjusted their aid plans in light of China's economic resurgence. The World Food Program (WFP), for example, ended its 25-year involvement in the country in 2005 to concentrate on African needs, especially given that continent's AIDs crisis. Japan, too, cut foreign aid to China in 2005 because of Chinese growth. Britain's Department for International Development (DFID) has indicated that its programming in the country will cease by 2011. Increasingly, China itself is becoming a donor nation, having contributed a small amount to the WFP for its programs elsewhere and has provided bilateral development assistance to certain African countries. More generally, Beijing is also heavily involved with others on that continent, like Angola and Sudan, where it is spending the equivalent of billions of US dollars.⁴

Canada is no exception to the position outlined above; indeed, in recent years criticism over the investment of scarce official development assistance (ODA) dollars in China has increased. These objections are usually based on some combination of the following:

- it maintains the world's largest military and is spending billions of dollars developing high-tech weapons systems;
- it put a man, Yang Liwei, in space in October 2003, followed by a lunar satellite;
- Beijing does not observe human rights in the way Canada would hope;
- the Chinese are "stealing" Canadian jobs because of the country's low wage structure;
- its economy has been one of the fastest growing for the past 15 years and it has reached a level of development that obviates the need for further assistance;
- Canadian aid should go to more "deserving" countries like Angola, Chad, Haiti or Mozambique, or;
- Beijing now provides its own ODA to a number of countries.

These are sound arguments, and the Stephen Harper Conservatives voiced many of them while in opposition. Further, while en route to the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum Leaders' Meeting in Hanoi in November 2006, Harper, now Prime Minister, severely criticized the Chinese human rights record. Later, the Conservatives cancelled the government's annual human rights dialogue with Chinese diplomats in order to, or so the government claimed, "make it more effective."⁵ The dialogue, created in 1997 as the cornerstone of Canada's new policy of engagement with China, was initially designed to enable Ottawa to put pressure on Beijing over its human rights record, but was perceived as increasingly ineffective.⁶ Of some importance with respect to the dialogue, both sides agreed to meet quietly and not resort to, as Adèle Dion, the director-general of human security and human rights of Foreign Affairs Canada, has noted, "megaphone diplomacy"; it seemed as if so-called quiet diplomacy of the 1950s and 1960s was back in fashion.⁷

Government policy often flows from prime ministerial interest and Harper's statement about human rights and China was unusually blunt. This position was given committee form through the activities of the House of Commons subcommittee on International Human Rights, chaired by Jason Kenney, during 2006 and 2007. Given both the above objections and Harper's critiques, is there a reason to continue Canadian official development assistance to the PRC?

A "Poor" Superpower?

Perhaps there is although not under the "aid" name, which the Chinese (and many Canadians) find inappropriate.⁸ Despite the dramatic statistics of Chinese economic growth in recent years, widespread poverty persists. A massive 20% of the world's impoverished – hundreds of millions of people – continue to live in the PRC's more marginalized, inland provinces on the equivalent of US\$2 per day. As Jintao Xu of Peking University has emphasized, "China is not a wealthy country at all,"⁹ an assessment supported by the fact that in 2008, its per capita income amounted to US\$2,000. C. Fred Bergsten of the Centre for Global Development has called China "a poor economic superpower."¹⁰ Moreover, the gap between the better off and those not so in the PRC is widening to dangerous levels. To highlight the huge distance that China still has to travel in development terms, Beijing insisted that Henry Paulson, then US Secretary of the Treasury, when making his fourth trip to the country in August 2007, travel to its impoverished northwest corner, to Qinghai province, before landing in Beijing. As the Chinese vice premier, Wu Yi, told him, she hoped that "the Qinghai visit [would] enrich [his] future testimony to the US Congress."¹¹

Nicholas Stern, the senior vice-president and chief economist at the World Bank, echoed Wu, commenting that “Despite the great successes of the last 20 years, there is still a lot of poverty in China.”¹² He calculated that about 100 million Chinese lived on US\$1 per day, while about 240 million lived in families with *consumption* per person of less than US\$1 per day. Overall, Chinese per capita income is about 6% of that of a Canadian’s and significantly, many of those who benefit from Canadian aid are in those very hinterland provinces which also tend to comprise the country’s ethnic-minority regions. As Stern remarked to his audience, “Combating this poverty requires an understanding of just who these remaining poor people are, where they live, and how they are affected by economic developments and government programs.” So who, he mused, are they?

As noted above, ethnic minorities are much more likely to be poor; they make up less than 9% of the population, but 40% of the absolute poor. Less-educated households, as in most other countries as well, were poorer on average. Similarly, female-headed households were also more likely to be poor. This is an increasing phenomenon in parts of southern and northwestern China as men leave small villages, drawn to the wage opportunities presented by development in Beijing, Shanghai and other growing cities. Finally, disability strongly correlated with poverty; of about 60 million disabled people in 1997, nearly half were poverty-stricken. As well, Stern mentioned rural populations, western provinces, and mountain and other poor counties as being largely by-passed by the PRC’s economic juggernaut.¹³ Further, these people are not covered by government-sponsored social security; that is for those who live in urban areas only.¹⁴

The rural poor are assisted by poverty alleviation projects that focus on regional development that are not nearly as effective as are urban programs. Nor has the passage of time narrowed the gap between rich and poor; as Stern has pointed out, “the incomes of poor people rose at barely *half* of the overall growth rate in the 1990s. Specifically, while the overall growth rate in household consumption per capita was 7%, the mean growth rate for poor people [was] a more modest 4%.”¹⁵ Stern’s prescription for ameliorating the condition of large numbers of poor people in China is what at least one Canadian development agency had been doing for years – empowering the very people who occupied the bottom rungs of the economic ladder in the PRC.

IDRC in China

The International Development Research Centre (IDRC), a Crown corporation based in Ottawa that funds capacity-building around the world, has been active in China for almost 30 years, supporting approximately 200 research projects over that time. While pursuing various development themes, its resources, never very large (about C\$45 million over that three decade period), have been focused on funding Chinese researchers in areas like community based natural resource management projects, or participatory decision-making in rural areas. As Li Xianoping, the director of the College of Humanities and Development at China Agricultural University in Beijing, remarked, the IDRC has been “one of the key agencies . . . to promote change” in rural areas in China.¹⁶ One project, for example, focuses on resources degradation and poverty which remain serious problems in China. The IDRC proposed a new development research approach and methodology, which were taken up by Chinese researchers. At the same time, the country was facing uncertain policy challenges, such as China’s entry into the World Trade Organization, and the formulation and implementation of new regulations and laws. A key component of the development process, the national rural development research system, was also facing these challenges. A farmer-centered, community-based natural resource management approach to research and extension, addressing problems of natural resource degradation, poverty and governance in local situations was proposed as an alternative to benefit both farmers and to increase the effectiveness of China’s national research.¹⁷

This has resulted in a more participatory approach better suited to local conditions as farmers got involved in the policy process at least in part because of IDRC-funded research. In the process, the Chinese system became less authoritarian and more “democratic” and, given the IDRC policy emphasis on gender equality, also more inclusive.¹⁸ Moreover, Chinese researchers became more involved with other partially IDRC-supported institutions like the Centro de Investigación en Alimentación y Desarrollo, which helped to enrich the national system. The lessons learned from this one, small project, were encapsulated in a book that is available in Chinese and in English, *Learning From the Field: Innovating in China's Higher Education System*.¹⁹ Did it have an impact on local governance? According to researchers involved it has; this work in rural natural resource management has positively affected provincial policy, regulations, and institutions, which has drawn Chinese practice closer to Canadian.

Similarly, research on water quality and availability, issues of increasing concern in China, has been funded by IDRC. Among other projects is one concerned with the Tarim Basin in China's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. It is a very large arid area, and the main agricultural production zone of the province. It is also the location of increasing investment in infrastructure and industrial development. Increased water use has led to the over-exploitation of surface water, declining water volumes in the downstream reaches of the Tarim River, and to environmental degradation in the crucial “green belt” which separates two large deserts in Xinjiang. The decline in water availability has obvious implications for agriculture, (and spreading desertification), and institutional and planning reforms for improving basin-wide water management remain serious. These projects had substantial policy impact on the provincial government, which adopted many of the recommendations. In the follow-up study, special attention was paid to issues of social marginalization in relation to water management decision-making based on ethnicity, poverty and gender.²⁰

A similar outcome can also be seen in areas as diverse as funding Chinese government statisticians for training in Ottawa on science and technology statistics, in collaboration with Statistics Canada. As well, with past IDRC support, the China Development Research Foundation, headed by Lu Mai, is encouraging broader participation in the public finance system to make the process more transparent, accountable and efficient.²¹ This can also be seen through research funded under the theme of globalization, growth and poverty on participatory budgeting. The research demonstrated “that public meetings on budgetary expenditures, even in the absence of elected representation, can dramatically improve the quality of decision making and public services.”²² This complements the PRC government's efforts to improve public sector performance, a welcome development all around. Further, CDRF, with some IDRC funding, has undertaken a project focusing on participatory decision-making at the local level, which it hopes will influence national government practice. Residents vote on policy priorities and some budgetary measures, for example, in determining whether a school or an old-age home will be built in a given year. This is a truly innovative and interesting project and it has drawn favourable senior government comment; indeed, on 4 July 2007, it was featured on CCTV news in China, a remarkable airing given national government policy and practice of only a few years ago, and the fact that CCTV is state controlled.

Another IDRC program, undertaken in conjunction with DFID, complements CDRF's efforts, and is extremely important to hundreds of millions of Chinese citizens. In its support of work undertaken by Chinese researchers, it focuses on a series of efforts around public accountability and public participation in the process to open national agricultural research agendas and decisions about research priorities, moving away from a focus on industrial agriculture and national laboratories, to provide some space for the needs and participation of poorer people from more fragile uplands. As well, it funds efforts to explore alternative models of

small-scale, farm-to-farm, firm-to-firm led innovation that may be more appropriate to western poor areas than models of innovation taken from eastern coastal regions.²³

This very brief account of a few IDRC-funded research projects in China demonstrates the Centre's ability to respond to needs identified by Chinese researchers to make research in the country more accountable to a broader range of citizens. The IDRC's range of projects supports applied research on social development and environment issues affecting people living in marginal areas. Its range of partners include universities, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, the Chinese Academy of Sciences and various institutes and academies doing applied work that yield significant benefit to the underprivileged in the PRC.

What also becomes clear from IDRC-funded work in the country is that it results in what might be called the first stirrings of democratization in certain areas through increasing the involvement of citizens in the decision-making, or decision-influencing, process. While it is not possible to mention the word "democracy" or even indirectly refer to it, that does not obviate its creeping implementation, especially at the more junior levels of government, under certain circumstances. In the process, lower-level government becomes more accountable to its citizens. The environment and climate change are two important issues in 2008 and IDRC-funded research in China addresses them both, which could positively affect other areas of the globe. According to chaos theory, a butterfly flapping its wings in the Brazilian Amazon might create a hurricane in the mid-Atlantic; by the same token, increasing desertification in the Tarim River basin might cause problems for northern British Columbia. Canadian support for these projects is, in effect, indirectly working toward Canadian foreign policy objectives in a way that the Chinese find appropriate to their circumstances.

CIDA in China

Similarly, from its first foray into China in 1981, when it concentrated on food aid, personnel exchanges, and institutional linkages, CIDA has changed its programming to take advantage of new opportunities in key areas where the Chinese are ready to work with Canadians and where CIDA support can serve foreign policy priorities such as human rights. Indeed, the guiding mandate for CIDA in China is restricted to two priority areas: human rights, democratic development and good governance, and; supporting China's environmental sustainability,²⁴ both areas in which the world would arguably benefit given PRC compliance with more stringent standards of operation. With respect to the former, as John Richards has pointed out, "in assessing the role of governance is the image of cycles, either "virtuous" or "vicious." China is obviously not a democracy, and corruption remains a serious problem. However, China has experienced, since the 1970s, a virtuous cycle in which somewhat better governance has led to better economic performance that, in turn, has created a demand for even better government performance."²⁵ And that is good news for planet Earth. Canada, through the agency of CIDA and IDRC, has helped to plough the soil in which some of those seeds have been planted. The harvest is being taken in slowly.

With respect to the environment, also an area of increasingly intense concern, CIDA has been active for the past 17 years in a project that weds Chinese development and the environment. Earl Drake, a former Canadian ambassador to Beijing, headed the Canadian side. As he recalled, it was a radically new approach when it was launched in 1991, following on a smaller scale project that had been launched a year before in Hainan Island. The China Council for International Cooperation on Development and Environment, the organization that came out of the initial CIDA funding, was groundbreaking: "There, what the Chinese said to us at the highest level [was that] we are not asking for money – we are just asking for your ideas, for good advice

on what to do on a problem that is a world problem. We consider this to be the best form of development cooperation.”²⁶

Robert Greenhill, the former president of CIDA, has called the council “A great example of how a little bit of money can go a long way.” It has had a “huge impact in terms of our credibility ... It is extraordinarily effective. The premier of China is engaged every year ... There is excellent work on governance being done in China via Canadian assistance. The whole issue of governance, human rights and a strategic approach to the environment are issues that are really important for China and really important for Canada.”²⁷ Further, and perhaps more importantly, the former premier, the acerbic Li Peng, who rarely gave praise to anything foreign, commended it after he had met the Council several times: “The Chinese government has implemented recommendations put forward by the Council. The Council is very different from many other organizations which criticize China without considering China’s limitations and without giving China any viable alternatives.”²⁸ As mentioned above, the *nature* of Canadian engagement in China has changed over the years; 30 years ago there was a concentration on support for education, food aid and poverty reduction. By the 2000s, however, the Agency had effectively moved away from this focus because, as Greenhill said, “in an economy twice [Canada’s], they have the wherewithal” to do that themselves.

CIDA has also moved away from any idea that its work in the PRC might be construed as “official development assistance;” it is “really mutual cooperation on challenging issues of mutual interest,” moving from an aid relationship to a development cooperation relationship, a not insubstantial difference. Gordon Smith, a former deputy minister of foreign affairs and, later, chair of the IDRC board agrees: What Canada provides “isn’t aid to a poor country, but it’s assistance to a country that wants to build on our, and other country’s, expertise in the world as they grapple with these [environmental] problems. In the end, it seems to me doing this is very much in Canada’s interest. The same would apply to the areas we are talking about here in terms of climate change, sustainable energy policies; that’s in our interest.”²⁹

And clearly it is. All Chinese researchers interviewed during the summer of 2007 used the metaphor of “spaceship earth,” popularized by Barbara Ward Jackson more than 40 years ago as a partial rationale for continuing assistance.³⁰ We are all in this together and never more so than at the present time, or so the analysis goes, and pollution sent into the atmosphere over China eventually comes down as rain or snow in Canada or the United States, given prevailing wind patterns. However, through the programs and mechanisms noted above, Canada has had an impact on legislation relating to Chinese environmental practices. With respect to forestry, Beijing University’s Jintao Xu has suggested that CIDA drove Chinese forestry policy through its programming in a healthy direction during the mid-to-late 1990s and early 2000s. Meetings on projects included Chinese and Canadian researchers, as well as high-level political representation from Beijing. His assessment on the effectiveness of CIDA’s long-term cooperation in the PRC? – “no other country has had this kind of influence [in this sector] in China.”³¹ And that is important for Canada given increasing environmental concerns and climate change, and for its relationship with China.

In those projects, China provided a significant portion of the funding, in many cases a multiple of the Canadian contribution. Moreover, very little, if any, Canadian money goes to China or Chinese researchers; the importance lies in the provision of Canadian expertise and for bringing Chinese researchers to Canada to engage with experts in discussions for training and exchanges.³² Greenhill noted that “We can still do those. We can help convene experts, we can help to access some world class expertise ... [In terms of good governance and the judiciary] we help to pay for a Supreme Court member to go to China to speak on issues of due process,

on the death penalty, and using the rule of law. This has actually helped to address human rights issues in a collaborative, but determined, fashion.” In the process, it also at least begins to address the current Canadian government’s demand that China view human rights more seriously.³³

Importantly, as noted above, CIDA has helped to build capacity in certain areas, like the judicial system, where the PRC is weak and has expressed a desire to change. This capacity building is critical, especially in China where higher education and research systems are organized along traditional disciplinary lines; Canadian assistance has helped to inculcate a more interdisciplinary and participatory approach to research, a development borne out by interviews with Chinese researchers in Beijing during November 2006 and July 2007. Moreover, as China becomes even more urbanized, as the numbers educated abroad increase and the exposure to foreign ideas accelerates, what kind of pressures will those factors exert in terms of governance changes?

Given this indication of persistent poverty, carefully channeled aid, and positive outcomes, why should Canada stop engaging with the PRC on the development front? Indeed, to do so would be counterproductive. As Gordon Houlden, the former director-general, East Asia, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, correctly told Kenney’s subcommittee, “The more we engage with China on all fronts as part of a comprehensive relationship, the better placed we are to advocate forcefully on human rights. Without engagement, we would lose avenues for dialogue and the means by which to advocate for human rights improvement.”³⁴ This comment was echoed by Joanne Alston, head of central research at Britain’s DFID: “We are certainly involved and engaged in China and very interested in China because China is very influential in the world ... We would be foolish not to be thinking about China and its role in the world. I think the last [UK] White Paper [on ODA] brought out that interest in China.”³⁵

Moreover, Australia, a country that is perhaps more like Canada than most others, has begun negotiations for a free trade agreement (FTA) with the PRC and is actively courting Chinese investment “to help cement a strong trading relationship.”³⁶ China is Australia’s best customer with US\$40 billion in two-way trade in 2007. While recognizing the nature of China’s authoritarian system, the necessity of engaging with the PRC pervades Canberra’s thinking. And much like its Canadian counterpart, the Australian Agency for International Development, is also active within China on many projects, investing multiples of millions of Australian dollars. This creates enormous goodwill that translates into the FTA discussions, but the projects funded also help to move the PRC toward greater accountability and transparency.³⁷

Canadian researchers, as well as the example set by this country, have had an impact on a very complex society. To expect, as perhaps some in Ottawa do, that it is an easy task to change the underlying structure of Chinese government, culture and the economy, or that it can be done quickly, is fantasy. The sheer numbers of people suggest that no other model than one developed in the PRC, and which comes out of its own context, applies. But to look at what China has achieved during the last 30 years in terms of legal reforms, since the beginning of the *kai fang* (opening up) era driven initially by Deng Xiaoping, is to realize that the introduction of increased human rights is impressive. While that is not to ignore the serious issues and problems that exist, and that China still has a long road to travel, to simply shut the door and say that the Chinese are human rights abusers and that Ottawa does not want to engage with Beijing, is blinkered, unfair and short-sighted. Legal reforms, for example, did not begin until 1978.

International Centre for Criminal Law Reform and Criminal Justice Policy and China

Qualitatively, Canadian participation in Chinese development through CIDA funding in justice programs has yielded tangible benefits for both Canada and China. An excellent example of that is the work of the International Centre for Criminal Law Reform and Criminal Justice Policy (ICCLR), based at the University of British Columbia but very active with their colleagues in the People's Republic. As the Centre points out, it "has two on-going programs with partner organizations in China to support their efforts to implement international standards in criminal justice and to reform the procuratorate system. The overarching goals of both programs are to facilitate the sharing of expertise and experience in promoting and strengthening the rule of law, human rights and good governance in China."³⁸ ICCLR has been active in China since 1995, undertaking research in the area of China and its judicial system, and the provision of technical assistance. Kathleen Macdonald, the acting executive director of the Centre, has noted that long-term engagement is a necessity when working with Chinese partners: "organizations are barely effective if they do one-off exercises" especially given a Chinese perspective that is "very different ... very layered." That is why with China, the Centre believes it can claim some success; it has developed a "sustained, engaged relationship that has grown."³⁹

The first project ICCLR undertook in 1995 was the Canada-China Criminal Justice Cooperation project, designed to allow Canadians to assist criminal justice reform in China. Critics took aim at the Centre, insisting that China was not ready for such draconian change. Undeterred, with the help from "a couple of strong people in CIDA who did see that legal reform was the building block for anti-corruption [initiatives], for legal aid, and which would help development dollars have the effect that we wanted them to if [ICCLR] could help with the legal system." the project went ahead. However, as Macdonald noted, "the importance of engagement is what makes the difference; a system is never going to change, and things are never going to get better unless you are engaged and working within it."

Have things changed within the Chinese system because of Canadian involvement? Macdonald believes so, although it is difficult to quantify success; "it is not as if you are building schools and you can say that 14 schools have been built." As Vincent Yang, formerly ICCLR's China program director, has observed, "In a huge country like China, changes usually take place mainly because of internal factors, but international assistance can speed up the process and reinforce the changes."⁴⁰ A few examples that ICCLR uses as indicators of success speak to the effectiveness of its engagement; workshops on prison reform along with 18 projects focused on community corrections: "That was learned from us and the Centre's team includes a collection of experts from us, but we also pulled in [other departmental] expertise from the department of Justice, the Canadian parole board, the RCMP and the Correctional Service of Canada, and they benefited from this as well as they now have an expanded network." With respect to the China Prison Society, ("a tough group to work with"), the most recent program is called "Implementing International Standards of Criminal Justice"; the first part was working with criminal procedure reform, the second focused on substantive criminal law, and the third dealt with the administration of criminal justice, which was primarily the China Prison Society. ICCLR helped to introduce "standards and norms, we had lots of exchanges and some tours, [and this has helped to establish] the first half-way house in China."

With respect to human rights, the phrase itself was only added to China's constitution in March 2004. And that addition, as some have suggested, is a concrete step because words do mean something. Following the Cultural Revolution, the number of lawyers, and the access to university, was very limited; "that is all very recent. It's not like Canada ... and I think that that is part of what's going on with the [Canadian] government. If you are not aware of the history and

the amount of change that is happening [in China] you are going to think with your Western perspective and Western lenses that everyone just goes to university and this is what happens, but it's no, no, no, no; there's a lot going on there."

Reduction in the use of the death penalty might also be cited as one change and here, Canadian organizations, through their work in the country, have also had some input. As was pointed out, "there has been considerable dialogue" within the Implementing International Standards in Criminal Justice in China project on international standards and norms. Further, in August 2008, the Shanghai-based *Journal of Politics and Law* will publish Yang's paper on the judicial control of the use of the death penalty. There have been seminars in China on the subject of death penalty abolition, and ICCLR has met with senior prosecutors from the Chinese People's Procuratorate in Victoria, British Columbia, early in 2008, where the latter mentioned Canada's contribution to a changing mindset. And this, according to Macdonald, represents enormous change; in 1998 or 1999, "we would not have had a death penalty conversation with them. Those are [good] changes."

As well, the fast-growing Chinese legal aid system and its place in any legal system is now on Beijing's radar at least in part because of Canadian involvement. And while there have been some crackdowns on legal aid lawyers in China in early June 2008 in terms of detention and prosecution, there has been some forward movement on that file. In 1998, when Beijing was beginning to investigate a legal aid law, the Centre became the first international legal institute to work with the Chinese on draft legislation. ICCLR had brought a high-level Chinese delegation including officials from the country's ministry of justice and its national legal aid centre, to Canada to study its legal aid system. Importantly, the PRC's minister of justice visited at the behest of the Centre, various deputy ministers over time have traveled to Canada, as has the deputy prosecutor-general from the Supreme People's Procuratorate (SPP), a very senior official. The Chinese were particularly interested in the Canadian experience as Canada, with its ten provinces, three territories and number of different legal aid models bore many of the hallmarks of their own country. Further, ICCLR brought in several other models from Australia, France and the United Kingdom, and China took what it wanted, created its own legislation, and began establishing its own legal aid centres. "So, while today we see some legal aid lawyers getting an exceptionally hard time, and that two have been disbarred because they defended Tibetan individuals, you still have to balance that against the fact that the country undertook this exercise in less than ten years. That's pretty fast. Their legislation and their reforms in less than ten years – that's faster than what we do in Canada."

And the successes in various areas go on, achieved through engaging with the Chinese. ICCLR has had a hand in building up China's anti-corruption practices, a high priority of its government. In 2004, the centre began providing support to the SPP's foreign affairs bureau to take the lead in establishing an International Association of Anti-Corruption Agencies (IAACA) under UN auspices. The first IAACA meeting was held in 2006 in Beijing attended by 1,300 delegates from 137 countries.⁴¹ ICCLR sent a team of experts to give its support to this organization. SPP's anti-corruption bureau emulated the Canadian model of combined forces special enforcement system for coordinating the efforts of the banks, the RCMP, Customs Canada, and other agencies in the 'war' on financial crimes and transnational organized crime.

Would things be less "progressive" in China now without this Canadian involvement? Undoubtedly yes, even despite the small amounts of funding involved. The Canadian perspective has been, or so ICCLR people say, important to Beijing. Moreover, Canada was one of the first countries "in" on criminal justice reform in China. CIDA began its programming in this area in 1995, a reflection of Beijing's attempts during the previous decade "to develop a

viable legal system and make the government and the courts answerable to an objective standard.”⁴² The first book produced by the Centre with its Chinese partners on the subject was in Chinese, *The Nations Standards and China’s System of Criminal Justice* (1998). The first book in English was titled *Breaking New Ground* for a reason. Since ICCLR opened the door in 1995, a number of other countries have become involved, even as Canada is scaling back. Australia, the European Union and the United States are “throwing big dollars” at legal reform in the PRC. As well, the EU and China have established a law school in Beijing that will reflect the former’s increased presence; half of the faculty will be Chinese and half foreign, and its orientation will be clearly directed toward EU (as well as Chinese) issues. It will also have an impact on coming generations of leaders in China’s law and justice community.

It is important to be involved working with influential Chinese jurists and legal institutes since they are the links to “the system.” For example, ICCLR works with several organizations in the PRC which are connected with the Chinese procuratorate or universities. Anyone with any power will also be a Party member, so “if you are trying to promote these reforms and are working on this process, which is the beauty of being the arm’s length Centre. [It] is ... working with the Research Centre for Criminal Law and Justice at the Chinese University for Political Science and Law, we know of their connections with the Party and that is how our information, our analysis and our lists of recommendations that we come up with jointly, gets fed into the Party.”⁴³ Indeed, jurists in the Chinese system, unlike the Canadian, actually write the legislation – they are extremely important figures in the process.

This has reflected overall Canadian foreign policy objectives, at least under previous governments. The Canada-China human rights dialogue, since cancelled by the Conservatives as noted above, had as a major objective “the implementation of international standards [and to] actively encourage China to sign, ratify, and implement international human rights instruments as well as to agree to visits to China by the various UN human rights monitors.”⁴⁴ Beijing is at least now considering joining the International Criminal Court, which would be a significant shift in policy. As former prime minister Paul Martin has correctly pointed out and which accurately reflects ICCLR’s mission in the PRC,

I think what the debate has to be ... what should be the nature of that aid [to China]? For instance, we talk a good deal, and so we should, about human rights. I’m not sure that hectoring the Chinese government is going to have an effect on human rights. But I do believe that because we do help, that in terms of funding institutions that promote human rights among the people, funding universities which are dealing with the question of civil rights, which we do, that, I think is perfectly valid because if what you really are concerned about is human rights, then in a country that doesn’t pay as much attention to human rights as it should, then what you’ve got to do is get to the people, build up the intellectual construct. And if you’ve got money going to that, which is obviously not money that would be spent by the Chinese government, then I think it’s valid.⁴⁵

FCM in China

Finally, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) has been active since 1986 in China, overseeing a number of projects that have been funded by CIDA. That said, CIDA is also only one small player among a number of foreign donors involved in providing funding in China, and in the area in which FCM is now engaged, the Canada/China Technical Cooperation in Migrant Labour Rights Project (MLRP), scheduled to run until 2010, others are crowding the field; AusAid has a significant presence as do the World Bank and Germany’s GTZ. The project is designed to assist the PRC in modernizing its municipal structure with respect to migrant labour

rights, with benefits accruing to impoverished Chinese and is being undertaken with the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) of the Chinese State Council. As well, participating Canadian and Chinese municipalities provide financial and in-kind contributions to support the implementation of the project. As the federation points out, the work “aims to strengthen the Government of China’s capacity to meet its international labour rights commitments, ensuring that rural migrants have access to the information necessary to benefit from formal labour market and non-discriminatory employment.”⁴⁶ As has been pointed out, this flows from China’s commitment “to labour rights and non-discriminatory employment practices [it has demonstrated] by signing and ratifying several international conventions such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.”⁴⁷ Further, the country “has already adopted various legislative and policy reforms that reflect the principles and objectives of labour rights in these international conventions.”

The project is designed to address the increasingly serious issue of rural to urban migration in China, with the attendant exploitation by employers of the alienated poor, and one cause of the estimated 75,000 “disturbances” recorded each year in the PRC. This population, now estimated at about 150 million, is forecast to increase by about 75% within the coming decade. As Tim Feng of the FCM points out, while the federation engages Chinese researchers to do work on FCM’s behalf, it provides no funding to any government official.⁴⁸ Indeed, as with other typical CIDA projects, Beijing puts up about 50% of the assistance. As municipal governments provide the majority of employment services for rural migrants, it is imperative that they do so in accord with international labour rights standards. The CIDA project helps to train local officials about their responsibilities and builds the knowledge and leadership necessary to address this problem. Overall, the objective is to:

- improve the harmonization of local regulations and policies to national legislation;
- establish a link between service delivery and policy development;
- increase the awareness and knowledge of migrant workers’ rights and issues, as well as the regulations that govern these rights;
- strengthen the capacity of local governments to provide appropriate services to male and female rural migrants, including ethnic minorities, and to manage inter-departmental approaches to these issues, and;
- increase local government capacity to monitor and enforce employer compliance with regulations related to migrant employment equity issues.⁴⁹

These outcomes, clearly, would help to *realize* Canadian foreign policy objectives.

How would FCM and its work help in China? The project has a unique mechanism, the migrant advisory group (MAG), which involves three levels of government, central, provincial and local. They meet in a policy forum to share local experience with policymakers from the national level. At the same time, those central officials provide advice to their local counterparts on the intricacies of implementing legislation in an appropriate fashion. This is critical. While acts passed by the National People’s Congress may have captured the “high moral ground” with respect to rural migration, implementation by municipalities sometimes failed to live up to the intent. MAGs permit some amount of consultation and coordination. FCM also encourages local government to establish an effective network of services for rural migrants aimed at *preventing*, as opposed to redressing, rights violations.

FCM has also targeted civil society groups in China, both in the areas that send rural migrants, and those that receive them. In April 2008, the federation participated in a workshop in Shehong organized by CIDA on emerging issues and challenges faced by migrants (and to which the German GTZ sent a representative). Government representatives, civil society groups and employers, like Adidas, attended. The objective was to discuss the establishment of “a functioning rights protection network involving all stakeholders.”⁵⁰ Further, government was keen “to ensure compliance with national and international standards on labour rights.” FCM put forward various suggestions mooted by the civil society groups with which staff had been working. There is also “a thriving set of grassroots organizations in China that are dealing with rural migrant rights which are very outspoken on human rights issues in terms of principle.”

Has FCM, in conjunction with its Chinese partners, made a difference for migrant rights, and in promoting a greater sensitivity more generally to human rights? Again, as with ICCLR its work is not necessarily quantifiable. Still, anecdotally it does seem to be the case. Working with grassroots organizations committed to ensuring greater respect for migrant labour *has* changed government mindsets. Policy implementation designed to ameliorate their lot has been the result. As Ann MacLean, the mayor of New Glasgow, Nova Scotia and a member of FCM’s standing committee on international relations, has correctly noted, the “two decades of international cooperation have brought mutual benefit to FCM and NDRC. The Migrant Labour Rights project builds on this relationship to assist local governments [in China] to provide services effectively and in accordance with international rights standards.” It is impossible to raise national expectations, along with the mobilization of non-governmental organizations, as this project has done, and leave them unrequited. Beijing has demonstrated a commitment to migrant labour rights that will continue to play out in China over a number of years.

Changing Canadian Policy?

Canadian policy with respect to China might now be in the process of changing as the “purists” in the Harper government have suffered a setback with the appointment on 25 June 2008 of David Emerson as the country’s foreign affairs minister, what a senior Liberal called “a bad day for us” given Emerson’s competence and professionalism.⁵¹ His policy, as the *Globe and Mail’s* Lawrence Martin writes, is “to keep the doors to China open ... [His] is a moderate voice [which] will bring maturity to a foreign ministry run by rookies. On China, he is tilting the balance.”⁵² In beginning a return to, admittedly, what might be called *realpolitik* (or perhaps self-interest), Martin goes on to note that:

Conservatives, quite correctly, are hardly enthused by Beijing’s human rights record and the cozy rapport it keeps with many of the world’s most odious regimes. As a consequence, relations with the economic giant have been rocky. But Mr. Emerson doesn’t want the politics to interfere with the economics. He recently announced the opening of six new Chinese trade missions. It was in keeping with his belief that, in not moving to gain a market there, “we are missing a generational opportunity to develop and diversify the Canadian economy.”

That may be true, and involvement in China is certainly a policy followed by all of Canada’s allies – Americans, Australians, British, French and Germans, to name just a few. To remain officially disengaged from China would also be to forgo influencing, if such is possible, any developments and internal discourse in the country. Jonas Gahr Store, the Norwegian foreign minister, put this position best, in another context: “Engaging does not mean lowering of requirements. It can be a means to set yardsticks, hold interlocutors accountable, and probe their thinking while surrendering nothing.”⁵³ Further, as Paul Evans, the former co-CEO of the

Asia Pacific Foundation, an independent, non-profit think-tank based in Vancouver, has correctly observed, the track on which Canada had seemed fixed, cool politics/warm economics, will not work.⁵⁴

Cool politics/warm economics also does not address some of the underlying tensions in Chinese governance. For example, how (or if) will Beijing continue to make its system less authoritarian, and what might be the effects? Dai Qing, an influential Chinese journalist who was jailed without trial in 1989 for publishing a book critical of the Three Gorges project, says that the dam represents more than a political and environmental debate:

[it is] a metaphor for China's changing society, a microcosm of what is happening in the whole of China, symbolic of the power struggle between reformists and hard-liners. The politicians who support the project are seeking power and have all the characteristics of that old society, that is, authoritarianism, the one-party system, central economic control, and personal despotism.⁵⁵

In this analysis, the reformers do not possess those dated characteristics. But if Chinese governance fractures, what comes next? That old Chinese proverb has it "may you live in interesting times." But those times might be *too* interesting.

To be engaged in the People's Republic in the way charted by previous Canadian governments, CIDA and IDRC is appropriate and suggests why it is necessary to continue to work with Beijing on various issues. The Chinese are in the midst of tremendous change, and because of that, so too are global relationships from which Canada is consciously remaining aloof. Fareed Zakaria, a US strategic analyst, has suggested in his new book, *The Post-American World*, that the third great power shift of the past 500 years is underway which largely focuses on the rise of Asia, and, importantly, China.⁵⁶ William Butler Yeats, in a slightly different context, captured this sense of the challenge, and perhaps apocalyptic foreboding, that a resurgent China poses to the West in the final two lines of his 1920 poem "The Second Coming": "And what rough beast, its hour come round at last/Slouches toward Bethlehem to be born?" History is cyclical, or so Yeats' believed, and for him, the early 20th century represented the end of the cycle that had begun with the rise of Christianity. It is important that Canadians, even in the very limited ways open to them, be one of the midwives of this changing world in which the PRC will figure so prominently.⁵⁷

The Necessity of Engagement

There is a process in place and certain Canadian organizations, which have cultivated a relationship for years, are well-situated to affect outcomes that could very well positively impact China, Canada and, arguably, the world. They are able to have conversations that will assist reforms. When it comes to talking about rights and reforms, some Canadian organizations supported by CIDA are able to do that with highly placed reformers in China. They also have access to the next generation through their work with universities. And what is lost if the present policy of disengagement persists? According to China expert David Winkler, a lot:

Other countries of consequence, Australia, the UK, the Americans, the Europeans, are moving into an engagement with the Chinese but we're fortunate because we were there early and have created relationships which are very useful. However, a failure to continue to be engaged doesn't just end our participation; it means we lose significant ground compared with other countries which are more than prepared to move in and to be engaged to our obvious disadvantage ... [W]hen we engage with the Chinese, we

don't have a hidden agenda. We don't have things we have to remove or hide. These are intelligent, knowledgeable, extremely capable people who pick up on this. So when we have, as we have had in the past, rising [Chinese] stars who are involved with the project ... come to Canada, [and] live with families, who see what we have, I don't think I'm being overly optimistic when I say that when they leave they take away something more than a better idea of how the common law system works. They take away the idea that you can have a very free society and all hell does not break loose. It's more complicated in China, I know, but they do take away things that would be extraordinarily hard to document.⁵⁸

But it will not happen on a day, a week, or perhaps even years. The Chinese have lived in a sealed world for centuries, and only since 1978 has there been a conscious opening to others. As one respondent noted, China has 5,000 years of history and only during the last ten of those have local people been voting in villages for their leadership. Political reform will happen, but only over time.⁵⁹ For Canadians to assist them, however slightly, in developing this less self-conscious approach to partners, to help in exposing Beijing to other ways of doing things, is very important. As Xue Lan, a professor and Executive Associate Dean of School of Public Policy and Management and Executive Vice President of the Development Research Academy for the 21st Century at Tsinghua University in Beijing has noted, in China "there is a strange phenomenon, what we call 'saying that the monks outside know better about the script.' So, if there is something unique, [and I] as a Chinese scholar say 'okay we should do this and that,' people might not listen. But if it is an international aid agency from outside China, people might say, 'hey, we will give them the benefit of the doubt.'"⁶⁰

The results of a recent poll taken by the Asia Pacific Foundation give some credence to remaining in China on the aid dossier, which is where official Canada is most engaged. It found that almost 60% of Canadians believed that China was increasingly important to Canada's prosperity, an increasingly important issue in early 2009, and an equal percentage believed that the PRC represented more opportunity than threat. Importantly, however, only 37% felt that human rights were improving as compared with 63% who responded that way in a poll taken in 2006.⁶¹ Still, despite the rather sobering numbers, the results do raise some other questions: How much of that perception is as a result of government activity and proselytizing to its point of view? How much do Canadians really know about China? How much do Canadians know about work being done by CIDA or IDRC on issues pertaining to human rights, or on the "modernization" of Chinese systems more generally? How much of that is China bashing?⁶² But Canadians would probably agree that, given Chinese potential, it is extremely important that Ottawa is at least in the running when issues are being discussed. Hau Sing Tse, CIDA's vice-president, iterated a point that many have made before him about the necessity of continuing to work with the Chinese:

It's a question of where you want to have some entry points that will make sense, given the conditions in China. Just to give you one fact ... at the end of the day, the ODA in China is less than 0.1% of their capital flows. Therefore, where Canada or the CIDA program can make a difference is really in being able to look at opportunities that can have a catalytic effect. Take a longer-term view while knowing that there are many serious differences of opinion and approach on how to deal with human rights issues between Canada and China, and look at where we can share with them the best practices, the Canadian practices, on how we deal with these issues. Focus on the conditions and areas where conditions in China permit certain reform-minded people and units or organizations or institutions to be able to capitalize on the Canadian development assistance program to advance the human rights agenda.⁶³

Simply reducing engagement and phasing out cooperation in the areas that *advance* a Canadian agenda does not make sense and may have an adverse spill-over effect far removed from the issue at hand. For example, in the area of climate change a “key goal” for the prime minister during the 2008 G-8 meetings in Hokkaido was “to push ... for stronger acceptance of the principle that major developing emitters such as China and India must be included in a new [climate change] treaty, and face real targets.”⁶⁴ Given the state of the relationship, the chances of Canada prevailing upon Beijing to adopt that position, however justified and necessary it might be, is very remote.

Conclusion

Rick Mercer’s rant, which began this paper, may make great television, or maybe even good politics, but it is terrible policy. When the Chinese are discussing Canada’s role in their national development as some, albeit few, do, the word “sucker” probably does not come up at all. Perhaps other, more forceful ones, are used given the current estranged relationship. Why would Canada choose this time to alienate itself from Beijing because of what can only be misplaced ideological reasons? As the examples chosen in this paper have illustrated, Canadian values and attitudes have influenced some Chinese behaviour in a manner that should be applauded by the present government. And much of that influencing has come via Canada’s two primary ODA agencies, CIDA and IDRC. *Newsweek*, no supporter of communism or its fellow travelers, has suggested that in the wake of the Sichuan earthquake and the upcoming Beijing Olympics, “2008 will turn out to be a remarkable year of change in China’s modern history... the country has achieved a new high-water mark in terms of the development of civil society, the push for greater government accountability and the accessibility of a party leadership that’s reached out to under-privileged masses at home and newfound allies abroad.”⁶⁵

At precisely the time that a confluence of circumstance, which includes the ground prepared and the work done with Canadian development dollars, Canada’s current government has taken a hard line on cooperation that the Chinese find perplexing, as do many experts in the field. Engagement on a wide front is the only method of dealing with China that Beijing finds appropriate. That is not to neglect human rights in the country, but to bolster them. And despite Canadian government policy, the country’s ODA/mutual cooperation is helping to achieve that objective, step by painful step. ICCLR summed up the line that should be taken in testimony to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development. It is not appropriate that “the social capital ... established between the two countries over 25 years should be abandoned. Rather, relationships like the one the ICCLR has been facilitating between the legal/judicial communities of the two countries needs to be used as a platform for transitioning to a more mature dialogue relationship as between equals.”⁶⁶

However, the final word should go to former Prime Minister Lester Pearson. Speaking to Columbia University’s School of International Affairs on 11 May 1966, he asked, with respect to what the West viewed as Chinese paranoia, admittedly in a different context:

How are we going to put ourselves in a better position to analyze and understand [Chinese] fears and suspicions? By bringing about better communication ... I ask myself whether it would not assist in trying to understand why they make these analyses and say these things if the government in Peking were subjected to the influences that come from greater world involvement; to the contacts and exchanges of view that come from fuller participation in the international community ... we should not base our policy

toward Communist China on the conviction that the regime has now developed an ideology – as the basis for its policies – with immutable rules and a perpetual fanatical force which is not now, and will not ever be, liable to the same internal and external forces that have led to changes in the policies and attitudes of European Communist governments ... In the case of continental China ... there must be more, not less, of direct engagement on our part ... We must prove that T.S. Eliot was wrong when he wrote “no man knows or cares who is his neighbour unless his neighbour makes too much disturbance.” Perhaps such total involvement and deepened awareness could be called the “escalation of positive participation.”⁶⁷

To that, one can only say “Amen.”

Recommendations Stemming from This Study

Canada faces important issues in determining its foreign aid policy for China. There are several key reasons why Canada should maintain its aid programs in China. The most important of these are:

1. In the 21st century, engagement with the People’s Republic of China is necessary, given its increasing diplomatic, economic, military and political influence around the world. The provision of official development assistance is appreciated by Beijing and is a useful fulcrum through which the Canadian government can move forward its relationship
2. Despite its present profile as a burgeoning economic superpower, China remains a poor country with GDP per capita, according to the 2009 *Pocket World in Figures*, of US\$2,000. The Canadian comparison is US\$39,010. The country’s ethnic minorities and the impoverished are the beneficiaries of Canadian ODA, the most vulnerable people in Chinese society.
3. As Barbara Ward noted in 1966 in her book *Spaceship Earth*, and later reinforced with René Dubos in *Only One Earth*, the entire planet is interdependent. What happens in China undoubtedly has an effect on Canada. Some Canadian assistance has gone into investigations of desertification, the preservation of water supplies, and improved land care through different agricultural methods. It is in Canada’s *own interest* to continue to fund this work, which would probably not be supported by Beijing, given its other priorities.
4. Canadian assistance helps to promote Canadian foreign policy objectives as espoused by the Harper government, of increasing attention paid to human rights and the establishment of conditions necessary for democratic governance. As demonstrated throughout this paper, ICCLR has played a major part in this in the PRC.
5. Aid can lead to trade and the latter is vitally important to Canada’s economic well-being. Dependent upon exports for about 40% of its GNP, the country must export in order to remain prosperous. Alternatives to the United States, Canada’s most important market, are increasingly important as the former experiences dire economic failures. China is a possible significant partner. Aid projects in, for example, livestock genetics funded by CIDA were a natural lead-in to interest by the Canadian business community.

If Canada accepts these arguments, several key policy implications follow. Specifically, Canada’s foreign affairs and international aid agencies should continue and/or expand their activities in these areas:

1. The impoverished West and South of China, and especially among the country's ethnic minorities;
2. Environmental projects;
3. Community-based natural resource management, an area of some expertise for IDRC and CIDA,
4. Governance and legal system reform, also an area of some expertise for IDRC and CIDA, and;
5. Those areas that might yield some trade potential for Canadian business.

China does not present an easy case for international aid, and "business as usual" seems like an inappropriate response to a country undergoing such remarkable and sustained transitions. Canada's national interests and the urgent needs of hundreds of millions of impoverished Chinese citizens require both a continuation of existing programs and creative re-engagement based on a comprehensive understanding of changing political and economic realities.

ENDNOTES

The author would like to thank a number of people for commenting on drafts of this paper. Their input certainly made it better, but I alone am responsible for any infelicities contained herein. They include Ryan Touey, Karin Holroyd, Vincent Yang, Kathleen Macdonald, Yuli Yang, David Winkler, Earl Drake, Ann Thomson, Peter Hoffman, Maureen Maloney and Annemieke Holthuis.

¹ Rick Mercer, *Rick Mercer Report: The Book*, (Toronto: Doubleday Canada, 2007).

² Duncan Hewitt, *Getting Rich First: Life in a Changing China*, (London: Chatto and Windus, 2007) 81. However, Hewitt, a BBC reporter, also deals with China's myriad problems.

³ Peter Engardio, *Chindia: How China and India Are Revolutionizing Global Business* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2007)

⁴ See, for example, Scott Johnson, "China's African Misadventures," *Newsweek*, 24 November 2007. See also Howard French and Lydia Polgreen, "China, Filling a Void, Drills for Riches in Chad," *New York Times*, 13 August 2007.

⁵ Geoffrey York, "Human Rights Dialogue with China Hurt by MPs," *Toronto Globe and Mail*, 24 November 2007, A-26. Why the Canadian government has adopted this very draconian policy is a matter of speculation and debate. I have heard from two sources it is because China is actively anti-Christian and many of those who oppose any dialogue with the PRC come from the fundamentalist Reform wing of the Conservative Party. Another perspective has it that this is a bone thrown to the socially conservative wing of the Party, rather than have it run with extreme positions on domestic issues, like abortion, which would be politically suicidal. Another factor may be the prime minister's calculation that voters on both the left and the right are angry about Beijing's human rights record, so this may be one way to win points across the whole ideological spectrum. Finally, there is the belief, held by some, that the government's position derives from long-term lobbying on the part of Taiwan which, being democratic, is much more skilled at the modern persuasive arts than is the government of the PRC. The prime minister has been receiving messages about China from Taipei even before the Conservatives came to power, and may have internalized that wariness. Still, the Canadian position makes no political sense.

With respect to human rights, some of our closest allies may be backsliding although this has provoked no comment from Ottawa. See, for example, Seymour Hersh, "The General's Report," *The New Yorker*, 25 June 2007. In this report, now retired Major General Antonio Taguba documents the case of torture during the Iraq War. Later, he said "There is no longer any doubt as to whether the current [Bush] administration has committed war crimes. The only question that remains is ... whether those who ordered the use of torture will be held to account." See "Pulling Back the Blanket," *The Economist*, 12 – 18 July 2008, 69.

⁶ However, some of the dialogue's supporters pointed out that in 2005, Canada used it to secure the release of 26 political prisoners in China. As well, the "dialogue" with China that this superseded, overseen by the United Nations, had been perceived to be "useless."

⁷ Testimony of Adèle Dion, director-general of human security and human rights of Foreign Affairs Canada before the subcommittee on International Human Rights of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, Tuesday, 5 December 2006. Canadians became the quintessential practitioners of so-called quiet diplomacy during the 1950s to the present. This relates primarily to US-Canada relations.

⁸ Interview with Kathleen Macdonald, Ann Thomson and Yuli Yang, ICCLR, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, 4 June 2008. As Macdonald, the acting executive director of the International Centre for Criminal Law Reform based at the University of British Columbia, has noted with respect to this point, in the late 1990s, personnel from the Centre "would say that they were going over to give lectures – you can't say that, and you can't say training anymore. We are having experts meeting and we are exchanging information. This is all about partnerships and information exchange. Both sides benefit."

⁹ Interview with Jintao Xu, Peking University, Beijing, 14 July 2008.

¹⁰ C. Fred Bergsten, "How Washington Should Respond to China's Economic Challenge," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 87, #4, 2008, 67.

¹¹ Qin Jie, "China 'Is No Threat to Anyone,'" *China Daily*, 1 August 2007, 1.

¹² Nicholas Stern, "Overcoming Poverty in China," Speech delivered at Beijing University, 14 June 2001, 5.

¹³ Stern 7 – 8.

¹⁴ Interview with Cai Fang, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Beijing, 15 July 2007.

¹⁵ Stern 11. See also Albert Park and Sangui Wang, “China’s Poverty Statistics,” *China Economic Review* 12 (2001), 384 – 398 for a discussion of the official under-estimation of poverty in the PRC.

¹⁶ Interview with Li Xianoping, China Agricultural University, Beijing, 27 November 2006.

¹⁷ Interview with Stephen McGurk, IDRC Regional Director for South Asia, Ottawa, 25 June 2007.

¹⁸ However, as much as IDRC might wish to focus on gender relations in the work it funds, there are limits. As Qi Gubo, also of China Agricultural University, told me, it is necessary to avoid “radical action” because government does play a powerful role in China. It was therefore necessary to focus on the impact of more gender equality on economic development. As well, she expressed a genuine concern that family “harmony” might be broken if researchers in China pushed too hard on gender equality. However, at CAU she did offer a course entitled “Gender and Development,” the first of its kind at the post-secondary level in the PRC. Interview with Qi Gubo, China Agricultural University, Beijing, 27 November 2006.

¹⁹ Ronnie Vernoy, Li Xiaoyun, Xu Xiuli, Lu Min and Qi Gubo, *Learning From the Field: Innovating in China’s Higher Education System*, (Ottawa: Foundation Books/IDRC, 2008).

²⁰ “Increasing Differentiation in the South: Towards a BrIC Strategy for IDRC?”, Policy and Planning Group, IDRC, BOG 2006 (03) 06.

²¹ Interview with Lu Mai, Executive Director, CDRF, Beijing, 19 July 2007. The China Development Research Foundation is modeled on the IDRC and was, in the beginning, at least partly supported through research funding provided by the Centre. Its programs reflect a new and developing China, and has a major focus on neighbourhood participation in what can only be called the democratic process, and government efficiency and transparency. See www.cdrf.org.cn

²² Stephen McGurk and Richard Fuchs, “IDRC in Asia: Report to the Board of Governors,” June 2008, BOG 2008 (06) 09, 15.

²³ Interview with Stephen McGurk.

²⁴ Testimony of Jeff Nankivell, director, China programs, CIDA, before the Subcommittee on International Human Rights of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, Tuesday, 5 December 2006.

²⁵ John Richards, “Can Aid Work?: Thinking About Development Strategy,” C.D. Howe Institute *Commentary*, #231, April 2006, 19. See Jennifer Welsh and Ngaire Woods, *Exporting Good Governance: Temptations and Challenges in Canada’s Aid Program*, (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2007). While perhaps not possessing the most appropriate of titles, this collection of articles speaks to the necessity of good governance in terms of development.

²⁶ Interview with Earl Drake, Vancouver, 6 June 2006. The CCICED is perhaps an echo of Barbara Ward Jackson’s International Institute for Environment and Development, established in 1971.

²⁷ Interview with Robert Greenhill, Ottawa, 15 January 2008.

²⁸ Email from Earl Drake, 31 July 2008.

²⁹ Interview with Gordon Smith, Waterloo, ON, 27 October 2007.

³⁰ However, the phrase had been used before that by Buckminster Fuller and Adelai Stevenson. See Barbara Ward Jackson, *Spaceship Earth*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966). See also, Barbara Ward and René Dubos, *Only One Earth: The Care and Maintenance of a Small Planet*, (New York: Norton, 1972). In a speech to the United Nation’s Economic and Social Council in Geneva on 9 July 1965, Stevenson had pointed out that “we travel together, passengers on a little spaceship, dependent on its vulnerable reserves of air and soil.”

³¹ Interview with Jintao Xu, Peking University, Beijing, 14 July 2007.

³² See testimony of Jeff Nankivell, director, China programs, CIDA, before the Subcommittee on International Human Rights of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, Tuesday, 5 December 2006. As Nankivell notes, the, at times, condescending attitude that Canadians have toward Chinese working on partly-Canadian funded project is misplaced: "It's also important to understand that when you look at individual projects, getting a CIDA project is not something that would be considered by a Chinese partner on a project as a reward. On any of the projects that you see in that list, the Chinese partners on those projects have to put in substantial resources on their side in terms of time and money to be engaged in these long-term projects. It's a significant investment for them, so it's not something we certainly perceive as being seen by them as a reward for anything or as a gift from Canada to China."

³³ However, the move towards any acknowledgement of human rights in the PRC is a slow process, but perhaps not any slower than was the case in Canada in years past. For example, as late as the 1970s, homosexuality was a criminal offense, as was abortion. In the early 1960s, the RCMP funded a project, called the Fruit Machine, designed to detect homosexuality among its officers and those in the public service. For an indication of the slowness of the development process, see Professor Hans Rosling in Gapcast #1, "Health, Money and Sex in Sweden." It demonstrates the principle of the snail's pace of political and social evolution. As he notes, it has really only been since 1955 that Sweden has become a first-world, highly developed society. He traces its development from 1705. It may be viewed at <http://www.gapminder.org/video/gap-cast/>. To expect China to accomplish in a few years what it took the West hundreds, if not thousands, of years to do is hypocritical. The Magna Carta, perhaps the beginning of the very slow process that ultimately led toward the British rule of law, was in 1136 AD!

³⁴ Testimony of Gordon Houlden, director-general, East Asia, department of foreign affairs, before the Subcommittee on International Human Rights of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, Tuesday, 5 December 2006.

³⁵ Interview with Joanne Alston, head of central research, and Paul Spray, deputy director, Caribbean and Overseas Territories department, DFID, London, England, 3 October 2007.

³⁶ Rowan Callick, "Investment a Potential Hotbed in FTA Talks," *The Australian*, 30 June 2008, 36. AusAid, the country's equivalent of CIDA, is also involved in projects in China. As the Australian Agency for International Development notes on its website:

"The [Australian aid] strategy matches the timing of China's 11th Five Year Plan and reflects the wishes of both governments for a new approach in development cooperation. The strategy is capable of responding to China's rapid development and reflects the changing nature of the bilateral relationship and the shared strategic objectives of both countries. This strategy moves away from discrete poverty reduction activities towards sharing ideas, high-level capacity building, and policy engagement. It builds government-to-government linkages for development and encourages both countries to work together on regional issues as partners for mutual benefit, reflecting China's emerging role in global development." See <http://www.aid.gov.au/china/aid.cfm>

³⁷ China is the biggest single source of foreign students in Australia – more than 130,000 of them. This also creates an enormous amount of goodwill toward Australia. See Glenda Korporaal, "Nation Whose Time Has Come," *The Weekend Australian*, 5-6 July 2008, 27. Canadian universities are very anxious to "cash in" on this, for them, relatively untapped mother lode.

³⁸ International Centre for Criminal Law Reform and Criminal Justice Policy Website accesses at http://www.icclr.law.ubc.ca/Site%20Map/Programs/China_Program.htm The ICCLR was created in 1991 as an independent non-profit institute by the government of Canada, the University of British Columbia, Simon Fraser University, the international society for the reform of criminal law, and the department of the attorney general of British Columbia.

³⁹ Interview with Kathleen Macdonald, Ann Thomson and Yuli Yang, ICCLR, Vancouver, British Columbia, 6 June 2008.

⁴⁰ Vincent Yang, Comments on the Paper, 30 July 2008.

⁴¹ ICCLR, "Engagement Works," A Presentation to the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, Pertaining to a Study of the Canada-China Human Rights Dialogue, May 2008, 7.

⁴² ICCLR, "Engagement Works," 7.

⁴³ Interview with Macdonald, Thomson and Yang.

⁴⁴ Testimony of Adèle Dion, Director General, Human Security and Human Rights, Department of Foreign Affairs, before the subcommittee on International Human Rights of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, Tuesday, 5 December 2006.

⁴⁵ Interview with the Rt. Hon. Paul Martin, Waterloo, ON., 27 October 2007.

⁴⁶ For a full account, see <http://www.fcm.ca>.

⁴⁷ See Federation of Canadian Municipalities, "Canada/China Technical Cooperation in Migrant Labour Rights," (Ottawa: FCM, 2008) 3.

⁴⁸ Interview with Tim Feng, Federation of Canadian Municipalities, Ottawa, 12 August 2008.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ "Canada/China Technical Cooperation."

⁵¹ Anonymous, Ottawa, 25 June 2008.

⁵² Lawrence Martin. "The Remarkable Resurrection of David Emerson," *Globe and Mail*, 26 June 2008, A18.

⁵³ Roger Cohen, "Scandinavia's Scarred Mr. Dialogue," *New York Times* online edition, 14 July 2008, accessed at <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/07/14/opinion/14cohen.html?th&emc=th> Store was talking about Palestine and the Hamas victory of 2007.

⁵⁴ Testimony of Paul Evans before the Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs, 5 February 2008.

⁵⁵ Grainne Ryder and Patricia Adams, "China's Great Leap Backward: Uneconomic and Outdated, the Three Gorges Dam Will Stunt China's Economic Growth," *International Journal*, Vol. 53, 1998 707. As well, Earl Drake, Canada's ambassador to China from 1987 to 1990, stated similar things; Canada could have some influence on the reformists through engagement, or it could withdraw and leave the field, to its own detriment. Interview with Earl Drake, 6 June 2008.

⁵⁶ Fareed Zakaria, *The Post-American World*, (New York: W.W. Norton, 2008) 6. As he points out, "We are now living through the third great power shift of the modern era. It could be called 'the rise of the rest.' Over the past few decades, countries all over the world have been experiencing rates of economic growth that were once unthinkable."

⁵⁷ The poem's first verse reads:

Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.

As Martin Marty notes in an essay on *The Second Coming*, "Early in the [last] century, Yeats saw and foresaw a world of violence, lawlessness and incoherence." The poem written in the aftermath of the First World War, reflects the hopelessness and despair that accompanied its aftermath. While this is not China, some in the West do see the rise of the PRC in similarly apocalyptic terms. See Martin Marty, "The Widening Gyres of Religion and Law," in Stephen M. Feldman (ed.), *Law and Religion: A Critical Anthology*, (New York: NYU Press, 2000) 24.

⁵⁸ Interview with Annemieke Holthuis, Maureen Maloney, Peter Hoffman, and David Winkler, Victoria, BC, 6 June 2008.

⁵⁹ Interview with Jikun Huang, Beijing, 18 July 2007.

⁶⁰ Interview with Xue Lan, Waterloo, ON, 27 October 2007.

⁶¹ “Despite a Chill in Public Perceptions, Canadians See China as Key to Their Future Prosperity,” poll results published on 24 April 2008. For a full account, see http://www.asiapacific.ca/about/pressreleases/2008/poll2_24apr08.cfm.

⁶² Xue Lan told me that, at the annual conference held at the Centre for International Governance Innovation in October 2007, he was very concerned about the amount of China bashing that was taking place, even among supposedly informed and sophisticated people. Interview with Xue Lan.

⁶³ Testimony of Hau Sing Tse Vice-President, Asia Branch, Canadian International Development Agency, before the Subcommittee on International Human Rights of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, Tuesday, 5 December 2006.

⁶⁴ Campbell Clark, “Harper to Push Afghanistan at G8 Table,” *Globe and Mail*, 5 July 2008, A11. Interestingly, IDRC has funded work in China on the effects of climate change.

⁶⁵ Mary Hennock and Melinda Lu, “All Shook Up,” *Newsweek*, 30 June 2008, 29. See also Edward Cody, “Activist Defends Chinese Farmers,” *Vancouver Sun*, 27 June 2008, A11. This article, reprinted from the *Washington Post*, documents the growing influence of small farmers in the PRC. The import is that their lobbying and activism, in a country that has traditionally frowned on this, have resulted in new protections for farmers, with the premier, Wen Jiabao completely onside. Lu Banglie, the activist featured, has become a “democracy advocate.”

⁶⁶ “Engagement Works,” 11.

⁶⁷ Library and Archives Canada, Department of External Affairs Records (RG 25), Vol. 10103, file: 20-CDA Pearson pt. 7, “Address by the Prime Minister of Canada, The Right Honourable L.B. Pearson, Appreciation Dinner of the School of International Affairs, Columbia University,” 11 May 1966.