

Behind P.E.I.'s land saga: Buddhist groups, big investments and calls for federal investigation

Posted by Geoffrey Clarfield

During the 1980s I read a book called *The Pacific Century* which told a fairy tale about a shift towards the Pacific and that Canada, the USA and the Pacific states would form one happy civilizational bloc.

Well that is partly true except that the Chinese want total control and they are doing so by subverting Prince Edward Island, Canada's smallest province. This goes unreported in the US and European press. I wonder why?

This is Andrew Rankin writing in the [Financial Post](#)

[Prince Edward Island](#) has long welcomed investment by a pair of well-funded Buddhist organizations from Taiwan that bought land, built monasteries and pumped millions into the local economy.

But there have also been accusations that the groups were, directly or indirectly, skirting provincial laws that limit how much farmland one group or individual can own and there were rumours of even worse violations.

The long-simmering land ownership controversy hit full boil

last week after P.E.I. Premier Rob Lantz formally asked federal authorities to investigate allegations of foreign interference and [money laundering](#) connected to land purchases by the Great Wisdom Buddhist Institute (GWBI) and the Great Enlightenment Buddhist Institute Society (GEBIS).



Lantz sent letters to both the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and the [Financial Transactions and Reports Analysis Centre of Canada \(FINTRAC\)](#) urging them to assess whether “information exists that could provide grounds for a criminal investigation” into the groups’ financial and property activities on the Island.

The request came just 10 days after a press conference on Parliament Hill where former solicitor general Wayne Easter and former RCMP officer Garry Clement warned that P.E.I. could be serving as a “forward-operating base” for Chinese government influence in Canada.

The finer details of the accusations are still murky, but here’s what we know and don’t know.

Who are the groups?

Bliss and Wisdom is a large, Taiwan-based Buddhist organization with a global following and significant financial reach. It is reportedly the spiritual umbrella for GWBI in Brudenell, P.E.I., where there is a monastery for roughly 200 nuns from Taiwan, and GEBIS in Little Sands and Heatherdale, P.E.I., which combined house about 600 monks.

How are the groups responding?

The GEBIS said it welcomes the provincial call for an RCMP and FINTRAC investigation.

The GWBI issued a similar statement, calling the inquiries “an opportunity for clarity and truth” and it said its members have always acted in good faith and complied with provincial laws.

Both groups say they have been unfairly targeted and that they’ve brought jobs, development and cultural diversity to a province that has struggled to attract new investment.

What are the issues in play?

At the heart of the controversy is beneficial ownership: who controls the land being purchased. . . Local residents and land protection advocates began questioning how such acquisitions could happen without breaching the act.

Did anyone investigate before?

The Prince Edward Island Regulatory and Appeals Commission (IRAC) – the provincial body responsible for enforcing the Lands Protection Act – launched an internal investigation in 2016.

But by early 2018, the probe was halted and its findings were never released, prompting more concern and speculation.

Why has nothing been done before?

Critics say successive governments have lacked the political will to act. Rapid development in rural P.E.I. was often celebrated as economic progress, and many stakeholders – from developers and realtors to lawyers – financially benefited.

Why is an investigation needed?

There are growing concerns about financial transparency and land ownership in P.E.I. Complex corporate and religious structures make it difficult to trace funds or identify who really owns land, raising governance and accountability issues.

Article content

P.E.I.’s laws limiting non-resident and large-scale land ownership are meant to protect local interests, but critics say they may be circumvented through shell companies or connected individuals, undermining fairness and public trust.

The key questions now are whether the RCMP or FINTRAC will pursue a criminal or financial investigation, whether P.E.I. will finally launch a public inquiry and whether anyone will address the regulatory loopholes that allowed these acquisitions to happen in the first place.

The whole [article is here.](#)