

**DEMOCRACY IS NOT TO BE FOUND IN BEIJING'S DICTIONARY**

In the history of the world, there has never been a true democracy.

Not really.

The closest representation of such a concept of government, ever achieved by any organised society in the history of the world, is the present representative form of democracy, such as the platform of government of the United States of America.

The Hongkong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) of the People's Republic of China (PRC) has made it only too clear, of late, that the 416 square miles that constitute the HKSAR is unlikely, ever, to achieve the status, even closely resembling the US version of democracy.

The PRC Government has not stated this, definitively, mind you, but its actions of late speak volumes.

**But We Don't Like Him !**

The Government of Chief Executive Tung Chee Hwa, according to a recent survey, conducted by the Home Affairs Bureau of the HKSAR Government, is at a new, low ebb.

There are suggestions that the HKSAR Government applies indirect pressure on certain parties to try to restrain what it considers to be unwarranted and negative publicity about Chief Executive Tung Chee Hwa and his Government.

If it is true, that the Tung Chee Hwa Administration has been trying to constrain negative publicity about the Chief Executive and Government Ministers, it has been all to no avail.

Just prior to the official HKSAR Government survey, that is the one that was published just last Thursday, the Financial Secretary, Mr Donald Tsang Yam Kuen, praised Chief Executive Tung Chee Hwa, claiming that Chief Executive Tung Chee Hwa had strengths that he had never seen in the colonial governors, even the last white one: Mr Chris Patten.

The Financial Secretary's praise followed last Tuesday's praise of the Tung Chee Hwa Administration by the Secretary for Justice, Ms Elsie Leung Oi Sie.

Last Tuesday, Ms Elsie Leung made a goodly list of all the achievements of Chief Executive Tung Chee Hwa.

She selected the venue of the seminar of the Hongkong members of Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) to deliver her defence of her boss.

She appeared to implore members of the CPPCC and, clearly, the rest of the HKSAR, by innuendo, not to blame the Tung Chee Hwa Administration for all of its mistakes.

Then, it was obliquely admitted that the Tung Chee Hwa Administration had made mistakes.

And, lastly, just last Friday, one day after the Financial Secretary sang the praises of the Chief Executive, the Hongkong Director of Beijing's Liaison Office, Mr Jiang En Zhu, made it very clear that Beijing loved the Chief Executive.

He is reported to have stated: *'I don't want to comment on individual matters. One thing that I would like to say is that it is in the interests of everyone to maintain the prosperity and stability of Hongkong.'*

It is unthinkable that Mr Jiang En Zhu would have made that statement without the full endorsement of Beijing.

No doubt, that one sentence was filtered more than once through myriad PRC Government Ministers before being endorsed by Mr Jiang En Zhu's superiors in Beijing.

That is the way that things are done in the Government of the PRC, especially at the high echelons of office.

Other CPPCC members have come out in support of the Chief Executive, also.

That is, absolutely, required in accordance with PRC Government protocol.

The CPPCC members, who have echoed their love for Chief Executive Tung Chee Hwa, along with Mr Jiang En Zhu, include, among others, the venerable Mr Henry Fok Ying Tung, CPPCC's Vice Chairman.

A Deputy of the powerful National People's Congress, Mr Cheng Yiu Tong, also indirectly supported Mr Tung Chee Hwa: *'No government could be perfect. We should suggest some constructive opinions to the (HKSAR) Government rather than rule out all that it has done.'*

The clear suggestion of Deputy Cheng Yiu Tong must be that there is need of *'constructive opinions'* and that the Tung Chee Hwa Administration is far from being *'perfect'*.

That is about as close to a criticism from the PRC Government about the Tung Chee Hwa Administration that has been made, to date.

And so the praise went on.

And all from sycophants and those people, who hold political, or quasi-political, positions in the HKSAR Government, those positions, having been handed to them on a plate by the Chief Executive, himself.

Self praise is hardly a recommendation.

### **A New Broom Sweeps Clean**

A new Chief Executive will be elected for the next 5-year term, starting 2002.

At this time, there is only one candidate -- naturally.

There is an 800-member HKSAR Election Committee, which will select, among other things, the HKSAR's Government's appointed representatives to sit on the Legislative Council.

It will, also, vote for their choice of the 2002 Chief Executive, that choice, being authorised by the PRC Government, without question.

It would be unfair to suggest that Beijing is pulling the strings of its HKSAR political puppets, but, at the same time, it is legend that, when Beijing proposes, its HKSAR's puppets, disposes.

The 800 members of the Election Committee comprise all of the richest people in the HKSAR, along with their eligible offspring, in many cases.

The turnout for the election of the 800-man Election Committee was put at about 19.49 percent.

Considering the enormity of the suggested work of this Election Committee, this turnout must be considered something of a record low -- in just about any jurisdiction where there are said to be *'free'* elections.

Of the 168,000 eligible voters, 32,823 eligible voters cast ballots.

And the low turnout was despite the HKSAR Government's every attempt to induce the voters to take an active part in the '*ceremonies*' (which is all that it was, in any event).

It is noteworthy to record that about 40 percent of the 800-member Election Committee, that is 320 members, was unopposed.

To say that apathy reigns, in respect of the perception of the HKSAR Government by the majority of the 7 million human inhabitants of the HKSAR, is to state the obvious.

Certainly, Beijing could care less about the HKSAR in respect of the numbers of eligible electors who deign to caste their votes for members of the Election Committee because Beijing does not even endorse a democratically elected government, even the representative form of democracy.

And Beijing may well be correct because, as many political analysts maintain, the PRC is not quite ready to embrace democracy, with its 1.30 billion human population of which number, most likely, only about 300 million people know the centre of their Government is located in a place called Beijing.

What many HKSAR people, who lived in the HKSAR in 1996 and 1997, still remember, no doubt, was the method that was adopted by the PRC Government when Mr Tung Chee Hwa was '*elected*' to be the first Chief Executive.

It is recorded that Mr Tung Chee Hwa was '*elected*' by popular vote.

The other '*candidates*' for the post of the First Chief Executive of the HKSAR were only present at the ceremonies to present the appearance of a type of democratic posture for the world to witness.

The US Government was well aware as to how the 1997 First Chief Executive was '*elected*' and has not been afraid to voice its opinion of the sham.

That Mr Tung Chee Hwa would be the first Chief Executive of the HKSAR was known at least 6 months prior to the City Hall public performance of the candidates, only one of whom stood beneath the flag of the PRC -- the eminent Tung Chee Hwa.

What is legend in the PRC is that '*elections*' of members to the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of the PRC -- the highest committee in Government -- are never held unless the outcome is known, well in advance of the '*elections*'.

Which makes matters appear to be very efficient ... and allows for engravers to inscribe the winners of seats on plaques, long before the '*elections*' are held.

In regard to the Election Committee of the HKSAR, it is interesting to note, also, that it is dominated by all the very rich and the very conservative of the HKSAR.

Since the Sunday, July 9, elections, there have been reports that this person and that person is likely to be elevated in the eyes of Beijing to high positions in the Politburo.

This unique honour will not put money into anybody's pocket, directly, but one has to remember that the medium of exchange in the PRC is not renminbi or the US dollar, but the perquisites that high office brings.

To be singled out to sit on the NPC, the CPPCC, or any other such high body leads to biggest and better things.

### **The Bottom Line**

The political system on the HKSAR is such that it brooks no dissension.

Those people, who do not '*play*' the Government's game, may expect to reap their just dessert: Ostracism.

Whereas it could be held that the PRC electorate may not be ready for universal suffrage, or could even tolerate a democratic form of government in any shape, regardless of what the Constitution of the People's Republic of China may state, the same cannot be said of the HKSAR electorate where the population has been weaned on democratic principles in spite of the fact that successive British Administrations did not allow a speedy pace of democracy at the polling booths.

The frustration of many HKSAR people in respect of the PRC's ostrich-like mien with regard to hastening democracy in the HKSAR is, probably, one of the reasons for the phlegmatism, which has become only too apparent on Election Day.

If electors feel that their vote is of no consequence, in the final count, then they will act accordingly and treat Election Day as, simply, a day to have a rest.

The lack of public awareness of social and political responsibility is only too painfully obvious in the HKSAR, today.

The Government of Chief Executive Tung Chee Hwa does not address this matter and so, the general feeling is that if my Government does not care about me, I shall not care about it.

Hence, the poor showing at election booths and hence the result of surveys, showing dissatisfaction at the Administration of the HKSAR.

All the words of praise, sung by the sycophants of Chief Executive Tung Chee Hwa will not improve the situation.

That, at this time, Mr Tung Chee Hwa will serve a second term in office, is a given, because Beijing has ordered it; and, the 800-member Election Committee will do as it is told.

And that is another major problem: Everybody believes that the Election Committee is controlled by Beijing, one way or another.

It is obvious that the HKSAR has made little to no progress along the political lines to having a democratic government.

This is a painful pill to swallow for those aspiring democrats who had high hopes, back in 1997, when the Government of the PRC assumed sovereignty over British Hongkong.

It is unlikely, from the appearance of things, today, that the HKSAR will ever achieve even a modicum of the type of representative democracy that North Americans enjoy.

But, one may suggest that the Tung Chee Hwa Administration of its Beijing masters will not be able to keep the lid on the boiling oil, that is the Hongkong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China, forever.

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