



## *The Betty Letters*

*My Dear Grandchild,*

*I am really getting worried over the potential fallout from this matter of Universal Suffrage for Hongkong. The so-called Hongkong democrats are demanding a time-table for Universal Suffrage for the seven million people of the territory, which is not unreasonable, but I noted that one protest, just last Saturday, outside the home of the Chief Executive (under renovation at Upper Albert Road), had the words on one plaque: 'No Peace Without Justice!' May I take this plaque to suggest something untoward? What really raised my blood pressure was when I learnt that The Honourable Legislative Councillor Martin Lee is off, once again, to Washington D.C. in order to have a meeting with senior politicians of the United States Government so that he can enlist their support for the democratic movement of Hongkong. What business is it of the United States to meddle in the internal affairs of the Government of China? For what reason is The Honourable Martin Lee trying to drag the Americans into this matter? Does he think that he can get Washington to apply the thumbscrews on Beijing? This is madness! The Honourable Martin Lee should be looking for support for the democratic movement, internally, not externally. While I am quite in favour of democracy, generally speaking, I am not in favour of giving democracy to an immature nation/territory where there is, quite likely, to be a paucity of suitable people to lead the nation/territory as their elected leader. Recently, I read that the Deputy Secretary General of the National People's Congress Standing Committee, Mr Qiao Xiao Yang, had invited a group of nineteen pro-democrats of Hongkong to a seminar in Shenzhen. This is a first for the Chinese Government and must indicate that Beijing is cognizant of the fears and aspirations of the people of Hongkong and wants to explain its position with regards to Universal Suffrage for the territory. The so-called democrats of Hongkong will stop only when the gates of Universal Suffrage are wide open, it seems. Nothing less will satisfy them, it has been stated, quite definitively. In one way, I see their point of view. But do these people see Beijing's point of view? Of course, Beijing is concerned about Hongkong and any unrest in the territory because nobody enjoys even the smallest stone, lodged in the heel of a running shoe, during the course of a marathon. What Beijing fears, I imagine, is that Universal Suffrage will lead to anarchy instead of an organised and well-oiled Hongkong Government. If Beijing is adamant – and this does seem to be its position – in that it will not permit Universal Suffrage for Hongkong until after, say, 2012, for what reason does not Hongkong seek an interim compromise solution?*

*A Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration could easily be established in Hongkong so that people, who have complaints or suggestions about the Hongkong Government Administration, or who want to see political changes, of one kind or another, may apply to the Parliamentary Commissioner in order to explain their positions. The Parliamentary Commissioner may then, if he determines that there is merit to the positions of the people who have petitioned him, apply to the Chief Executive of Hongkong for the views of the Parliamentary Commissioner to be passed on to Beijing. In other words, the Parliamentary Commissioner would become the go-between of the people of Hongkong and the Government of Hongkong. Since the Chief Executive of Hongkong has a duty of fidelity to both the people of Hongkong and to Beijing, he would be bound by his oath of office to forward the Parliamentary Commissioner's determination to his immediate superiors in Beijing and to request an immediate response. Naturally, the Parliamentary Commissioner must be a person beyond reproach, being impartial, objective and having no political axe to grind. He (or she) would, most likely, be a person, such as a retired High Court Judge or, going international, a learned political science scholar from a top university. The top politicians in Beijing are no fools and they would soon see the logic in having such a system as an interim measure, leading up to Universal Suffrage in the fullness of time. Such a system would, most likely, be welcomed by Beijing since it opens up a continuous and constructive dialogue between the people of Hongkong*

*and the heads of the Government of China. Also, the Parliamentary Commissioner would be able to explain the fears and aspirations of Hongkong people to Beijing in a manner, which is conducive to construction and political progress in the territory. There would be no reason for The Honourable So-And-So to petition bigwigs of the Government of the United States of America because Hongkong would have its own system of government, which lends itself to a free and impartial exchange ideas in the spirit of construction. The political way forward, as far as I am concerned, is not by indulging in mutual combat, passive or antagonistic, but by dialogue and understanding. It is said that the prerequisite to friendship is an impartial exchange of ideas. So, let it be so.*

*Talk to you next week.*

*Chief Lady*

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