

Four-Point Reflection on Firm Confidence in “One Country, Two Systems”

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Nowadays, there is a problem of firm confidence in the socialist road, theory and system with Chinese characteristics. As one important part of it, does the “One Country, Two Systems” policy bear the same problem? The answer is affirmative, in my opinion. The problem is mainly whether the connotation of our confidence is scientific, whether its basis is sufficient, whether its prospect is in compliance with the development direction and goals and whether its significance is of great importance.

I. Connotation of Firm Confidence in the “One Country, Two Systems” Policy

Talking about the firm confidence in the “One Country, Two Systems” policy, first of all, the question is: what on earth is the connotation of the “One Country, Two Systems” policy? Only when this issue is clarified, can we be clear whether our confidence is scientific and whether it is worth sticking fast to.

The main connotation of the “One Country, Two Systems” policy includes four closely related aspects: First, one country. This is the foundation of the “One Country, Two Systems” policy and the fundamental political prerequisite and basic guarantee to achieve the peaceful reunification of the motherland. “One country” refers to the fact that there is only one China in the world and Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan are inseparable parts of China. Only the People’s Republic of China (PRC) can represent China internationally. Any attempt to create “two Chinas”, “one China, one Taiwan”, “one country, two governments” and “Taiwan independence” is a departure from the supreme interests of the country and the nation and is intolerable. Second, the two systems coexist. This is not only the basic way to achieve peaceful reunification, but also an important feature of the unified state system of China after reunification. Under the framework of the “One Country, Two Systems” policy, the main part of the country, i.e., the mainland, adheres to the socialist system, whereas the non-main part of China, i.e., Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan maintain the capitalist system unchanged. The two systems coexist peacefully for a long time, but the status of the two systems is different. The main part practices socialism. This is the premise. Some regions under this premise are permitted to practice capitalism. Third, a high degree of autonomy. This is the security for the long-term maintenance of the capitalist system and way of life in Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan under the “One Country, Two Systems” policy. Hong Kong and Macao and Taiwan Special

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Administrative Regions (SARs) have been and will be established in accordance with law after the reunification. They have enjoyed or will enjoy a high degree of autonomy in all aspects except foreign affairs and defense (Taiwan may keep its own army), including: executive, legislative and independent judicial power, including that of final adjudication; financial independence; existing laws remain basically unchanged; private property protected by law; their own determination of monetary, financial, tariff and other policies within the region; may use a regional flag and regional emblem; and official languages may include other languages in addition to Chinese. After reunification of the two sides across the Taiwan Straits, Taiwan may retain its party, administrative and military system under Taiwan tube and may send officials to the Central Government for office. Fourth, remaining unchanged for a long time. This is the basic security for the prosperity and social stability of Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan after reunification and the promotion of national rejuvenation. "One Country, Two Systems" is a basic principle and policy that China will practice for a long time. It is not an expedient, nor a short-term or strategic plan, but a basic state policy that China will steadily carry out for a long time.

The 3rd Session of the 7th National People's Congress (NPC) adopted the *Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China* (hereinafter as "the Hong Kong Basic Law") on 4th April 1990 in accordance with the provisions of the "One Country, Two Systems" principle. The 1st Session of the 8th NPC adopted the *Basic Law of the Macao Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China* (hereinafter as "the Macao Basic Law") on 31st March 1993. In accordance with the provisions of the Basic Laws, Hong Kong returned to the motherland on 1st July 1997 and Macao returned to the motherland on 20th December 1999. Their handovers have resulted in the positive reinforcement on the work of the peaceful reunification of Taiwan.

A lot of facts after the handovers of Hong Kong and Macao have proven that the "One Country, Two Systems" policy is completely correct. The work report of the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) deeply expounded the scientific connotation of the "One Country, Two Systems" policy on the basis of summing up the practice, pointing out: "The underlying goal of the principles and policies adopted by the Central Government concerning Hong Kong and Macao is to uphold China's sovereignty, security and development interests and maintain long-term prosperity and stability of the two regions. We must fully and faithfully implement the principle of 'One Country, Two Systems', under which the people of Hong Kong rule Hong Kong and the people of Macao rule Macao and both regions enjoy a high degree of autonomy. We must both adhere to the one-China principle and respect the differences of the two systems, both uphold the power of the Central Government and ensure a high degree of autonomy in the Special Administrative Regions, both give play to the role of the mainland as the staunch supporter of Hong Kong and Macao and increase their competitiveness. At no time should we focus only on one side to the neglect of the other." The report not only puts forward the above "underlying goal" to fully and faithfully implement the principle of "One Country, Two Systems" and properly handle "three pairs of relationships", but also recommends "six general requirements" on the work on Hong Kong and Macao: "The Central Government will act in strict accordance with the Basic Laws of the Special Administrative Regions, improve work mechanisms for their enforcement, and firmly support the chief executives and governments of the two special administrative regions in governing the two regions in accordance with the law. The Central Government will firmly support them in leading the people from all walks of life in focusing on economic development, taking

effective steps to improve the people's wellbeing, and advancing orderly and phased-in democracy as well as inclusiveness, mutual support and harmony. The Central Government will increase economic ties and trade between the mainland and the two regions, and promote exchanges and cooperation between them in all fields. The Central Government will also firmly support the Chief Executives and Governments of the two Special Administrative Regions in promoting the unity of our compatriots in Hong Kong and Macao under the banner of loving both the motherland and their respective regions and in guarding against and forestalling external intervention in the affairs of Hong Kong and Macao."¹ These important expositions are both the scientific summary of over ten years' practice after the handovers of Hong Kong and Macao and the directional and strategic insights on the future practice development, fully showing that the "One Country, Two Systems" policy is the great wisdom of all times concentrated from all countries in the world and from the Chinese nation in particular to achieve reunification of the motherland. It is a major decision affecting the future and destiny of the four places, the Asia-Pacific and even the world. It is a grand strategy affecting the overall situation. It is a major innovation in theory and practice with a major theoretical, practical and international significance. It is scientific and credible.

II. Basis Upon which Firm Confidence in the "One Country, Two Systems" Policy lies

The firm confidence in the "One Country, Two Systems" policy comes not only from the determination and perseverance of New China to unify the motherland since its founding, but also from more than 10 years of practical experience of the handovers of Hong Kong and Macao after the peaceful reunification and the "One Country, Two Systems" policy has been put forward since the reform and opening up. And the confidence comes more from the compliance with the development law of human society, the social development law of socialism, the governing law of the CPC, the people's choice, historical choice, practical achievements and sober-minded analysis and comprehensive grasp of the times trends and historical development opportunity and challenge. This confidence basis can be analyzed from multiple angles, but mainly from the following five aspects:

First, viewed from the five thousand years of history development of the Chinese nation, opposing separation and realizing reunification is the general trend of historical development.

Although the motherland separation occurred repeatedly in history, its unity or reunification has always been the main stream and been in the dominant position. During the development process from the Warring States period to the early Qing Dynasty, the Chinese nation had experienced the development process of going to the grand unification from big separation for almost three times. The first time witnessed the grand unification of Qin Dynasty and Han Dynasty from the separation of the Spring and Autumn and Warring States. The second time saw the grand unification of Sui and Tang Dynasties from the separation of Three Kingdoms, Jin, Southern and Northern Dynasties. The third time was the grand unification of Yuan, Ming and Qing (former) Dynasties from the separation of Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms, Song, Liao and Jin Dynasties. The serious study of those three ongoing grand unifications enables us to see a clear and strong unification. And the unification time lasted longer and longer. The unification scale became larger and larger. The unification system base became firmer and firmer. And the unification idea had

penetrated into the hearts of the people deeper and deeper.

It can thus be seen that the peaceful reunification of the motherland under the principle of "One Country, Two Systems" complies with the general trend of thousands of years of the Chinese nation to pursue unity and oppose separation in history. It is a charity that conforms to this historical development trend. It is a glorious crystallization of inheriting and carrying forward this historical wisdom.

Second, viewed from the perceptive of China's modern history, our peaceful reunification of the motherland under the principle of "One Country, Two Systems" is the people's choice, the choice of history and the inevitability of social development.

As an oriental ancient civilization with five thousand years of history, China has had many glorious periods and made outstanding contributions for the development of human civilization. After the Opium War in 1840, China was gradually reduced to a semi-colonial and semi-feudal country under the strong oppression of imperialism and feudalism. It made sacrifices rarely seen in the world. Numerous people with lofty ideals conducted exploration with difficulty for ways to save the country and revive the nation. After the CPC was founded in 1921, it has adhered to combining the basic principles of Marxism with China's reality and characteristics of the times, summarized the experiences in practice and gradually formed a correct road of the Chinese revolution, construction and reform and realized the Chinazation/sinicization, modernization and popularization of Marxism so that it has achieved the victory of having completed the new democratic revolution, established New China, realized national independence and liberation of the people. Since the founding of New China, it has completed the socialist revolution, established the basic socialist system and made arduous exploration on the socialist construction road. Since the third session of the 11th CPC National Congress, it has carried out reform and opening up with huge political, theoretical and practical courage. It has created, maintained and developed socialism with Chinese characteristics. It has opened a new era of development and progress of the Chinese nation and ushered in the bright prospects of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. Despite the fact that the CPC has gone some detours and made some mistakes in exploration for revolution and construction due to lack of experience and some subjective and objective factors, it has always relied on itself and the sound strength of the people, corrected mistakes by itself, risen up from setbacks and moved forward from lessons. This fully shows that the CPC is truly a Marxist party serving the people heart and soul, with strong error correction capabilities and keeping pace with the times. Only when China moves towards socialism under the CPC leadership, can China be saved. Only socialism with Chinese characteristics can develop China and help achieve the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation – "China Dream".

Third, viewed from the practice of their handovers, "Hong Kong and Macao have, since their handovers, embarked upon a broad road along which they and the mainland draw on each other's strengths and pursue common development, and the success of the 'One Country, Two Systems' principle has won global recognition."² Those successes are demonstrated in politics, economy, culture, society, international exchanges and other aspects.

- Politics: Hong Kong and Macao compatriots have elected their own Chief Executives and administrative bodies in accordance with the Hong Kong Basic Law and the Macao Basic Law respectively. In recent years, Hong Kong and Macao compatriots, just like those of the mainland, have shared the independence, democracy, freedom and dignity of the PRC with the increase of China's overall national strength, the development of socialist democratic construction and culture

prosperity and won the attention, support and respect from the people across the world.

- Economy: The economic development of Hong Kong and Macao has been continuing steadily. Although Hong Kong and Macao suffered attacks from the East Asian financial crisis in the early years of their handovers, they met “SARS” epidemic infestations later, and experienced sustained concussion of the international financial crisis in recent years, they have still maintained a sustained and steady development by relying on their own hard work and backed by the strong support from the mainland and its development dividends. Take Hong Kong for an example, Hong Kong GDP has kept growing steadily since the SAR establishment. It was USD 176.3 billion in 1997 and it broke through USD 200 billion in ten years time, reaching USD 207.1 billion in 2007. It reached USD 242.4 billion in 2011. Macao’s economic development is even rarer in the world. Its 2012 per capita GDP was USD76,588, more than doubled that of Hong Kong.

- Culture: Various cultural exchanges have been increasingly expanding and cultural development has appeared thriving. The handovers of Hong Kong and Macao have promoted the tourist economic development there. What impresses the ordinary people there most is that mainlanders go to Hong Kong and Macao in succession for tourist travels, which has brought about the economic development there. And Hong Kong and Macao people go to the north for investment, industry and business and comprehensively expand exchange and cooperation.

- Society: Residents live in peace. The close contact and the relationship between the mainland and Hong Kong and Macao have brought about the social stability and happiness of the people in the mainland and Hong Kong and Macao.

- International Relationship: Hong Kong and Macao have, since their handovers, made great efforts to develop the financial sector, tourism, entertainment, trade and emerging industries by taking advantage of the good opportunity of the world multi-polarization, the economic globalization and cultural diversity. They have become world famous financial centre, trade centre, entertainment centre, casino centre, tourism centre and information centre, and greatly strengthened friendly exchanges with various countries and regions of the whole world. The economic, political, cultural, technological and other interactions are closer and have produced more results.

Practice is always the foundation for understanding the source and motivation. It is also the fundamental criterion for judging the truth of the knowledge. The above-mentioned facts have fully demonstrated that the most fundamental reason for such prominent achievements that Hong Kong and Macao have made in just mere ten years is that we have followed the will of the people in our practice and acted in line with the people. We have effectively implemented the scientific concept, theory, principles and policies of peaceful reunification and “One Country, Two Systems”.

Fourth, viewed from seizing the general trends of the times and the historical development opportunity, the implementation of the “one countries, two systems” principles has resulted from the sober-minded analysis and comprehensive grasp of the general trends of the times and the historical development opportunity.

The scientific judgment and comprehensive understanding of the historical position in which the CPC was in the 1980s enabled us to have grasped the opportunity of the reform and opening up and the development of the socialist cause, responded to the challenges and made tremendous achievements under the adverse conditions of the drastic changes in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and weak and in the low tide of socialism across the world. After entering the 21st Century, the CPC 16th National Congress made a judgment of great significance on the basis of the comprehensive analysis of the development of the domestic and international situation that China

must seize the strategic opportunities and can accomplish a great deal in the first 20 years of this century. Precisely because of this right judgment, we had applied to the need of the current times, taken a series of corresponding measures and achieved a brilliant result of a sustained, steady and rapid growth for ten years in succession. In the face of the tremendous changes of international and domestic situations of today, the CPC Work Report to the 18th National Congress pointed out: "An examination of both the current international and domestic environments shows that China remains in an important period of strategic opportunities for its development, a period in which much can be achieved. We need to have a correct understanding of the changing nature and conditions of this period, seize all opportunities, respond with cool-headedness to challenges, and gain initiative and advantages to win the future and attain the goal of completing the building of a moderately prosperous society in all respects by 2020."³ We firmly believe that under the guidance of this scientific judgment, the future is still a period of an important strategic opportunity for China's development.

Fifth, viewed from thinking and understanding, we have firm confidence in the contemporary Chinese road and we have full confidence in the "One Country, Two Systems" principle.

What is most prominent is demonstrated in the following three aspects: (1) the bold confidence of practice. From the overall national perspective, the total amount of the national economy of China in the world has jumped to the second place in ranking from below tenth place just in a few years' time. Socialist democratic politics has jumped to a new era level. Cultural undertakings and cultural industries have initially achieved great development. The national strategic capacity to cope with risks of serious challenges and to protect against natural disasters has been enhanced unprecedentedly. From the point of view of people's livelihood level, we have created the "China miracle" and "oriental miracle". We have not only achieved the historic leap from poverty, then to subsistence and then to the overall well-off of people's lives. What is more, we have benefited the entire people to the maximum extent with the reform and development achievements. We have completely ended the history of "payroll tax" by the broad masses of peasants. We are constructing a social, educational and medical security system that has the most extensive coverage in the world, including "education, labor income, medical services, care for the elderly and housing". From the international status, China has returned to the centre of the world stage after having been pushed to the edge of the world stage and suffered the insults from foreign powers. China's emerging power status and role has been recognized by the world and strengthening relationship with China has increasingly become the mainstream of the national policy of all the countries in the world. "Voice of China" is increasingly showing a strong momentum. From the form of civilization, China is transforming from farming civilization to industrial civilization with modernization as the target. It is marching forward towards the joint and coordinated development of new types of material civilization, spiritual civilization, political civilization, social civilization and ecological civilization. (2) the strong theoretical confidence: The successful road of socialism with Chinese characteristics has been gradually formed under the direction and guidance of the theoretical system of socialism with Chinese characteristics. It is the product and crystallization combining the basic Marxist principles with China's national conditions and the characteristics of the times. It has theoretically explored and answered a series of major questions, such as what kind of socialism to build and how to build socialism, what kind of a party to build and how to build the party, what kind of development to achieve and how to develop, etc. This socialist road embodies the governance experience and wisdom of several generations of

Chinese Communists. It is a high unity of compliance with regulations and purposes. It has such important characteristics as Chinese features, scientific features, people's features, times' features and open features. (3) lofty political confidence: It has set the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation as the fundamental goal. It has set achieving common prosperity of all people as a basic goal. It has set promoting the comprehensive development of man as the ideal value of a relentless pursuit. It has set promoting the building of a harmonious world as the righteous and important mission. It is a high aspiration and a lofty ideal. It has a strong appeal, cohesion, guidance and influence on the broad masses of people. It should become the firm conviction of the Chinese communists, people of all nationalities across the country, Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan compatriots and the broad masses of overseas Chinese.

III. Prospect of Firm Confidence in the “One Country, Two Systems” Policy

If what is said above is the ground upon which our firm confidence in the “One Country, Two Systems” policy is based, then the firm confidence in the development prospect of the “One Country, Two Systems” policy is about where the confidence will develop or about the development goal and direction of the confidence.

The development prospect of the “three firm confidences” and the firm confidence in the “One Country, Two Systems” policy which is extended and developed from them is the stage development goals and long-term development goals of the CPC. In other words, the CPC Minimum and Maximum Programs are closely related. Since the 3rd session of the 11th National Congress, the CPC has made a scientific judgment that China is still at the primary stage of socialism on the basis of summing up the historical experience since the founding of New China and the new practical experience since the reform and opening up and with the deepening of understanding of the national conditions. This scientific judgment has provided with an overall layout a general basis for the socialist road, theory and system with Chinese characteristics. It has provided the five-in-one coordinated development of the socialist economy, politics, culture, society and ecological civilization with Chinese characteristics. It has also provided the foundation stone to the general task of socialism with Chinese characteristics: which is to achieve socialist modernization and the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. It is the theoretical sublimation of the CPC new consideration/reflection on socialism and the national conditions of China. It has not only reflected the CPC ideological principles of consistently adhering to the principle of combining the universal truth of Marxism with China's realities, but also contained the ideological connotation of the dialectical unity between the CPC maximum program and the program at the present stage. It has indicated the correct direction for the development of our socialism at the primary stage. It has determined the development goals and prospects for our confidence.

As mentioned above, a necessary prerequisite to implement the “One Country, Two Systems” policy is that the main part of the country must adhere to the socialist road with Chinese characteristics under the leadership of the CPC, and strive to do a good job of our own things. Exactly how is our prospect to achieve the “two-centennial” goals at this stage, especially to achieve the goal of comprehensively building a moderately prosperous society by 2020? It must be admitted that the goal of building a moderately prosperous society in the first 20 years of the new century put forward by the 16th National Congress of the CPC, the new requirement to fully achieve

the target of building a well-off society put forward by the 17th National Congress of the CPC and the goal of comprehensively building a well-off society put forward by the 18th National Congress of the CPC in accordance with people's desire and business development requirements, are magnificent and arduous indeed, but can be achieved through efforts. For example, the goal put forward on economy of "GDP and per capita income of urban and rural residents double those of 2010" can be realized after calculation if the average annual GDP growth rate stays at around 7% and the urban and rural residents' per capita average annual growth rate remains at 6.8% in the eight years after the 18th National Congress of the CPC. Our average annual growth rates in these two areas in the previous ten years were higher than those in the eight years calculated above. 2002-2011 witnessed an average annual growth rate of China's GDP at 10.7% and the urban and rural residents' per capita average annual growth rate at 9.5% and 7.4% respectively. This has provided us with a practical experience and many other favorable conditions to achieve the established goals. The Work Report to the 18th National Congress of the CPC put it well: "As long as we remain true to our ideal, are firm in our conviction, never vacillate in or relax our efforts or never act recklessly, and forge ahead with tenacity and resolve, we will surely complete the building of a moderately prosperous society in all respects when the Communist Party of China celebrates its centenary and turn China into a modern socialist country that is prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced and harmonious when the People's Republic of China marks its centennial."⁴ We believe that we must also be able to push China's socialism to an intermediate and advanced stage after the realization of the "two centennial goals" and continuously consolidate and develop the socialist system. We will ultimately achieve the lofty ideal of communism after a dozen or even dozens of generations of unremitting efforts. By then, the development of such four places across the Taiwan Straits as China's mainland, Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan will be more brilliant and splendid.

IV. The Meaning of firm confidence in "One Country, Two Systems"

Confidence, for any people, is the first secret of success. It is a sound and positive psychological element and mental state resulting from emancipating the mind, seeking truth from facts and innovation on the basis of independence, self-reliance and consciousness. Scientific ideals and beliefs and self-confidence are an inexhaustible source of enormous spiritual support, spiritual power and wisdom. For the "One Country, Two Systems" principle, firm confidence is also of major significance.

First, if you have firm confidence in the "One Country, Two Systems" principle, you will seriously read and study the relevant literature, laws, regulations, principles, policies, and its ideological and theoretical foundation of "One Country, Two Systems" in a study-type organization and study-type society. You will understand more consciously why the "One Country, Two Systems" principle is practiced and how to practice it so that you will become its conscious believers.

Second, if you have firm confidence in the "One Country, Two Systems" principle, you will in practice persistently emancipate minds, seek truth from facts, advance with the times, be realistic and pragmatic, constantly go deep into realities and timely summarize advanced experience, seriously find new cases and new problems encountered in the practice of the "One Country, Two

Systems” policy, take effective measures to solve them, overcome difficulties and obstacles, unswervingly advance along the road of socialism with Chinese characteristics and become conscious practitioners of the “One Country, Two Systems” policy.

Third, if you have firm confidence in the “One Country, Two Systems” principle, you will hold high the banners of patriotism and socialism, consolidate the political foundation of the “One Country, Two Systems” policy, comprehensively and correctly implement the strategic policy of “One Country, Two Systems”, conscientiously implement the “underlying goal” and handle well the “three pairs of relationships” as well as the “six general requirements” for the work on Hong Kong and Macao put forward in the work report of the 18th National Congress of the CPC and become conscious defenders of the “One Country, Two Systems” principle.

Fourth, if you have firm confidence in the “One Country, Two Systems” principle, you will, from the negative examples in history and reality, learn lessons from loss of faith in theoretical conviction and loss of confidence which led to disasters.

The Work Report to the 18th National Congress of the CPC put it clearly: “History teaches us that the law of the jungle will not lead to the coexistence of human society and that the arbitrary use of force cannot make the world a better place.” “China opposes hegemonism and power politics in all their forms, does not interfere in other countries’ internal affairs and will never seek hegemony or engage in expansion.” “The Chinese people love peace and yearn for development. We are ready to work with the people of other countries to unremittingly promote the noble cause of peace and development for mankind.”⁵ This shows that our confidence is precisely the foundation and guarantee for us to continue to hold high the peace, development, cooperation and win-win banner in the world, unswervingly safeguard world peace, promote common development, unswervingly take the road of peaceful development and firmly pursue an independent peaceful foreign policy.

Notes:

¹ The Drafting Committee of the Reports to the 18th National Congress of the CPC (2012). *File Compilation of the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China*. Beijing: People’s Publishing House. 40-41.

² *Ibid.*, 40.

³ *Ibid.*, 15-16.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 43-45.