

'One System, Many Countries'

The Chinese are unique in devising innovative ways, not always following Marxist orthodoxy, and coining unusual slogans as well to translate their national agenda into action with international fervour. It is simply misleading to take these slogans at face value—they both reveal and conceal the truth. They have been campaigning for decades the idea of 'One Country, Two Systems' with a view to integrating Taiwan with mainland China, hopefully through peaceful means. It's difficult to forecast when they will unite but to everyone's knowledge, it won't come soon. Also, in the changed globalised economic culture two 'different' systems no longer differ in their approach and both are exploitative in nature. What is more mainland is gaining enormously from Taiwan's investment potential. Taiwan doesn't see any threat from the Beijing brand of communism to their burgeoning business and it matters. The situation virtually reflects 'one country, one system', not the 'one country, two systems' as claimed by the mandarins of Beijing. They think they have successfully applied the same principle towards integration of Hong Kong and Macao.

While delivering a New Year address titled "Jointly Improve the Welfare of People of All Countries" Chinese President Hu Jintao reiterated the oft-repeated Chinese political stance of "Hong Kong people governing Hong Kong", "Macao people governing Macao". He emphasised in no uncertain terms the importance of maintaining a high degree of autonomy for long-term prosperity and stability of Hong Kong and Macao. Presidential statement sounds fine. But what about Tibet? Not a word was uttered about Tibet and Tibetan refugees dotting across the globe. Maybe, Tibet's integration is so complete that it doesn't require any mention. Maybe, Tibetans are enjoying too much autonomy as no voice of dissent is allowed there, lest the myth of high degree of autonomy gets shattered. In truth 'People of Tibet don't govern Tibet'. Tibetans living in exile, never viewed the so-called autonomous region as really autonomous, having any chance for the people of Tibet to assert their right to self-determination without which autonomy means nothing. Tibetans are unlikely to believe something just because it makes the Chinese feel comfortable.

The Chinese scenario may be juxtaposed on India with a reverse swing. The sultans of Delhi are in reality struggling with the 'one system, many countries' syndrome. They do not constitute autonomous regions the way the Chinese do and yet they think the federal units of India enjoy enormous financial autonomy. In essence federal units—states—enjoy municipal powers though 'India' is sold to the world as the biggest showpiece of democracy. If separatism that is now sweeping across the length and breadth of the country with all its political and ideological fall-out then there are too many republics within a republic though all obey the same market system, and market, legal or illegal, looks great leveller for separatists and integrationists. Regional dispensations in different states are separated and united as well at the same time.

Kashmiris think all non-Kashmiris in their land are aliens. So do so many ethnic people in the North East. They do not believe they belong to India—or for that matter one country but as for the system they are very much part of it and they find nothing wrong in obeying the same market rules. At least it doesn't hurt their non-Indianess. Not that they are offering alternative economic model even in areas where they could assert their autonomous rights despite the presence of huge security forces, symbolising the centralised authority.

Indian case is also unique in the sense that there are too many 'mainstream' parties with no national programme. The regional movement and outlook is everything, the national aim

nothing. They differ from separatist organisations on the question of using violence—or non-violence.

Neighbouring Pakistan too, like India has similar problems as singular Pakistani identity is in a shambles. Today Pakistan lives at many levels but market system remains same even for the Talibani semi-liberated zone in the West. Both moderates and religious fascists rub their shoulders when they come to market. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, being a shrewd politician as he was, introduced Islamic socialism but Zia Ul Haq removed socialism just to call the state Islamic while imposing harsh religious codes on every aspect of social life. Despite overwhelming sway of Islamic identity Pakistanis continue to wander in the wilderness about how to define Pakistan nationalism. Both India and Pakistan are on the same wavelength when they talk of nationalism without recognising dozens of sub-nationalisms that are threatening stability and integrity.

Interestingly the Chinese are in a better position today to talk peace with both India and Pakistan. Maybe, they will be able to exert their influence in South Asian theatre more effectively than ever before as they have begun to treat SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) as one unit. Not for nothing they have donated US \$200,000 to SAARC, albeit it has been the weakest regional grouping in the world right from the beginning. □□□