

## **Eight: Craving For Grandiose**

### **4: Bravo, Hongkong!**



In 1984, an agreement arranging the return of Hongkong to mainland China in 1997, was signed between British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and Chinese Premier Zhao Ziyang. Both leaders promised to attend the Hongkong return ceremony. In 1997, Zhao requested to attend the ceremony in Hongkong. Jiang exploded: “Absurd!” pounding his fist on the table. He ordered Luo Gan to step up the security at Zhao’s residence to keep him firmly under house arrest.

The narrow-minded Jiang Zemin, who delighted in flattery, couldn’t stand the thought of letting Zhao take credit.



Therefore, he disallowed the public from knowing the fact. In the CCP's propaganda campaign afterward, Zhao was either blurred or cut out of photos that bore witness of the historical moment. Jiang ordered the Ministry of Propaganda, to shift the public attention towards the hand-over of Hongkong. The ceremony marking Hongkong's return was to be the focus of the world's attention, a rare and historical event. Jiang was extremely eager to seize the occasion and make a show of himself.



Some CCP high ranking officials stated at one meeting, that the return of Hongkong, though an important and much-anticipated event, was not something to boast about. For the sake of the Nation and Party's image, the General Secretary of the Party should stay in Beijing. This made Jiang very upset and shaken, for his presence at the event would have



implications, for personnel arrangements to be made at the Party's 15th Congress. The uncompromising Jiang thus insisted on going to Hongkong.



On June 30, 1997, Jiang arrived in Hongkong in high spirits. At a home with seniors, he spoke people from Shanghai, in Shanghai dialect about his skills at Majiang. At the shopping center, he greeted an arranged welcoming crowd, in Mandarin Chinese, an accent of the Yangzhou dialect. Jiang couldn't speak Cantonese, but that didn't deter him, he would mimic Cantonese all the same. After seeing Jiang who despite his title of President of China, came across as somehow bizarre and bereft of self-esteem, the people of Hongkong couldn't help but frown upon him.



On June 30, as it rained heavily, the troops marched to Hongkong beneath a sky of dark clouds. Between midnight of June 30 and early morning of

July 1, the governments of China and Great Britain went through the procedures relating to the transfer of Hongkong's authority.



At the gathering, Jiang who was the media focus during the event made a speech in his capacity as the President of China. He repeated the word of Joint Declaration, that Zhao had co-signed: the policy of one country, two systems; Hongkong is to be governed by the people of Hongkong, and that it should be a high level of autonomy would not change for 50 years, he declared, for this was to be the policies guiding the central government for years to come. With those words still resounding in the air, the color of Hongkong's sky gave way to the color red.



Soon it was decided that Hongkong's special administrator, was to be named by Beijing authority. The policies of the Hongkong government, was now only to be implemented after final approval from the central



government in Beijing.

And the Hongkong people's freedom of speech soon was restricted among other changes. Within a few years, Hongkong, once known as one of the four Asian Dragons, and the pearl in the Orient for its prosperity and freedom, had fallen so fast, as to had to request funding from the Central Government. The move sparked complaints throughout the island.



Before Hongkong's return to China, when China and United Kingdom were negotiating the transition of power, Beijing intended to establish Article 23 of the basic law, to govern treason and crime of subversion, to extend CCP's totalitarian control to Hongkong. The proposal received strong opposition from many circles in Hongkong and the United Kingdom.

To secure a smooth transition of power, Beijing publicly announced, that it would delay the passage of Article 23.



Due to the need to maintain the appearance of the One Country, Two Systems, Jiang could not apply the same totalitarian suppression of Falun Gong in Hongkong, as in mainland China. Hongkong is an international center, and major tourist destination, where Falun Gong practitioners are distributing truth materials. Jiang could not stand this happening under his nose, he considered the Article 23 Legislation, to be the best way to get rid of Falun Gong in Hongkong.



In 2002, when the Hongkong government facing reappointment, Jiang expressed unreserved support for Tung Chee-Hwa's second term. Secretary of Justice Elsie Leung, who was born in a family of underground CCP member, also continued for a second term. While On Sang Chan Fang who had always been known for speaking her mind, and was called the conscience of Hongkong, was forced by Jiang to resign. Besides, Secretary of Security Regina Ip Lau Suk-ye was eager to show



Jiang her ability and loyalty, and could hardly wait. The time was right for Jiang's plan in Hongkong.



Not surprisingly, soon after Tong assembled his new cabinet, the dept justice quickly announced the Hongkong government's decision, to establish Article 23 of the basic law. The public comment period on the proposed Article 23, was only three months long. A more detailed proposal was to be published no later than the beginning of the following year. The proposal was to be sent to the Legislature to be reviewed and passed. Elsie Leung said she had already communicated with Beijing on this matter. The issue of Article 23 received tremendous attention. Opposition from various groups in Hongkong, and Chinese people the world over remained strong and was getting stronger.



July 1, 2003, six years after Hongkong's return, 500000 Hongkong

residents took to the streets marching.

The protest against the Hongkong government proposed Article 23, was far larger than expected. It's not only shocked Hongkong but also took the world by surprise. While the CCP's media reported differently to the mainland people, that 60 thousand people celebrated the anniversary of Hongkong's return to China. The demonstration in Hongkong shook Beijing.

The political forces in Hongkong became divided under the pressure from public opinion.



On the evening of July 6, chairman of the Liberal Party, James Tien, announced his resignation. Secretary of Security, Regina Ip Lau Suk-ye, had very low public support. And Financial Secretary Antony Leung Kam-Chung was exposed for his financial scandal. Both resigned from their posts. Article 23 just couldn't get enough votes to pass. By then, Jiang had lost, and could not turn the situation around.





The notorious Tung Chee-Hwa, who kowtow to Jiang at the expense of Hongkong people, officially resigned from the Hongkong Chief Executive position on March 10, 2005, after losing his main benefactor Jiang Zemin, and was deemed as damaged goods, by the CCP regime in Beijing.