

DEBAT

Ronnie C. CHAN

Très bien, je vais rapidement et très bientôt ouvrir le débat à tout le monde, et vous pourrez poser n'importe quelle question sur la mondialisation ou sur Hong Kong, mais permettez-moi de dire une dernière chose.

Etant ici en Afrique et en présence de beaucoup de mes amis européens, je trouve cela très intéressant que les Européens, quand ils sont allés en Asie et en Afrique, aient pillé ces endroits, – et venant de Hong Kong, je devrais le savoir –, qu'ils aient colonisé ces endroits et pris les ressources naturelles. Alors qu'aujourd'hui, les Chinois paient pour les ressources naturelles ; ils les achètent au lieu de les piller.

Je me souviens qu'il y a une vingtaine d'années, à Davos, je suis tombé sur Newt Gingrich, et il a été le premier à me dire : « Ronnie, prêtez attention à l'Afrique, il y a beaucoup de potentiel là-bas ». J'ai donc commencé à venir en Afrique et, 23 ans plus tard, je ne peux m'empêcher de poser la question suivante : qu'a fait l'Amérique en Afrique ? Est-ce ce qu'Eric a appelé la mondialisation hégémonique ou est-ce ce que la Chine commence à faire aujourd'hui, ce qu'il a appelé quelque chose comme une mondialisation connectée telle que, pour démarrer sur le plan économique, tous les pays peuvent commencer à partager le bénéfice économique de la mondialisation ? Eric, si vous avez quelque chose à ajouter, ajoutez-le maintenant, sinon je vais donner la parole au public. Nous avons tout le temps. D'accord ?

Eric LI

Ce que j'entends par universalisme hégémonique, c'est d'avoir un dirigeant hégémonique qui applique le même ensemble de normes et de règles à tout le monde, par opposition à ce que j'appelle le pluralisme en réseau, qui consiste à permettre à différents pays de s'engager dans la mondialisation selon leurs propres conditions.

Ronnie C. CHAN

Merci. J'étais à Londres ces derniers jours, et cinq personnes m'ont raconté comment la police de Hong Kong était si retenue dans la rue comparée à Paris, Barcelone, New York, Los Angeles, Chicago ou Londres. Je ne veux pas débattre de cette question, je vous encourage tous à regarder la totalité des images plutôt qu'un seul cliché choisi par les médias ; regardez l'ensemble et ensuite nous aurons une discussion à ce sujet, d'accord ?

Ronnie C. CHAN

There are several people, there are two gentlemen here in the front, the one back there first, and then the gentleman here, and then, finally, our friend from Ethiopia.

Hervé MARITON

Thank you, Hervé Mariton. First, a quick question to Eric Li, well, a statement in a way. In the way you described political elections in the West as often being a tight and complex process, and you are right on that, but maybe we prefer tight and difficult elections to no elections at all.

Second question, to the whole panel and the moderator; do you not believe, dear Chinese friends, that the present attitude in Hong Kong would rather draw most of our countries – I am French – in more liking towards the US in the evolution of globalization? Globalization could be a multilateral process; as was stated previously in the morning, Europe could stand, in a way, between China and the US, in the idea that there should be neither US or Chinese domination, but since we believe that many of our values are presently challenged, maybe we feel more of a community of values with the US and the Western world.

I just want to say again, as Mr. Leung knows, and his statement was very interesting concerning the Basic Law, that it is guaranteed by an international treaty under the scrutiny of the UN, and it is not, as indeed, you've not stated, and that was very honest from you, Sir, it is not a purely internal affair. Thank you.

Eric LI

If you like elections, by all means, have as many as you want, and as often as you want, maybe every day referendum is better than the elections, eventually you will produce some good leaders, I am sure, but do not force other people to have them or have them in your way, that is my point, that is all.

Ronnie C. CHAN

Okay. The Chinese do not force their system on others, right? Okay. Thank you.

Chun-ying LEUNG

On the question of international treaty, I presume you are referring to the treaty known as the Joint Declaration, signed in 1985, or rectified in 1985 between China and the United Kingdom.

As far as the election of Chief Executive is concerned in the Joint Declaration, just in case a few of our friends in the audience might buy the allegation that China goes back on its commitment to democratization in Hong Kong as set out in the Joint Declaration. Let me read this to you, 'The Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall be selected by election or through consultations held locally and be appointed by the Central People's Government'. In other words, if China wanted to do away with the Election Committee election, which produced me as the last term Chief Executive, and replaced it by consultations, through consultations held locally and then appoint the person at the end of a consultation process, China will not have breached the Joint Declaration.

Ronnie C. CHAN

My comment to you Sir is when you talk about the community of values, that is wonderful, I think the West has really brought some very good value to the world, that is, frankly common to human nature, and you do it one way, you enshrine them and you codify them, which is very good. However, I asked Angela Merkel, about six or seven years ago in Berlin, I said, 'Madame Chancellor, you keep talking about shared value...', I said, '...I come from Hong Kong, which is now part of China, as an ethnic Chinese, am I supposed to share your value?' By saying so, so many times, you draw a line in the sand and say, 'I am on this side, are you on my side or are you on the other side?' I do not know what the experience is of our African friends, they have tried democracy since World War II, I wonder how many of them have been very successful. Perhaps there are other ways. Why should we fashion ourselves after just one way of

achieving the common value, should we not allow others to do it their way as well? Europeans and Americans account for about a billion of the world's people, which leaves another six-and-a half billion people out there; are they supposed to share your values and do it your way? This is a question to be left to the audience to answer yourselves.

Chun-ying LEUNG

Excuse me, let me very quickly chip in, tongue in cheek. When I was a young child, I had this idealistic view of ultimate democracy for mankind on this planet, and this is let all people in this world elect one leader and one God; a global leader and a global God. We now have 7 billion people on this planet, 1.4 billion Chinese, 1 billion Indians, and so on and so forth. Shared values, democracy, ultimate democracy, one government, one leader; who would that leader be? What value would that be? Now, that was when CY Leung was a young child with a rather simplistic view of life, the world; now I know the world is much more complex than that, I do not hold that view anymore, and I know the realities and the practicalities. Thank you.

Meir SHEETRIT

Thank you. I come from Israel. Mr. Leung said at the beginning, when you spoke about Hong Kong, something that contradicts election; you said, there will be an election and after somebody had been elected then the government of China had to appoint him, which is a contradiction to elections that we know in the West.

I admire the possibility and the power of China to control 1.5 billion people, it is unbelievable; I see what happens in very small countries; we have a lot of problems without 1.5 billion, but I am afraid that what is happening in Hong Kong today is not good for China for two reasons. One, is the fact that they have proven that it is possible to make achievement by protests, which could move, and be exported to mainland China itself. Secondly, I am not sure that this kind of action against the idea of sending prisoners from Hong Kong to China to be judged is as important to China as the riots you have in Hong Kong.

Are you not afraid of Maslow's ladder, which is coming up now in China? Maslow's ladder says that the first stage of people is that they want to have security, and then in the second stage they want to have food, and only when they have security and food they want to teach, to study, and after they have studied they want to give their opinion, and they want to be involved in politics. When I follow China, I see that people are standing in the fourth stage now, which, in my opinion, means that, in the future, the people of China would like to bring their opinions to the government, which means, in my opinion, that in the near future China will face a lot of activity of Chinese people who would very much like to be involved in the political process, and elect their own people, and you may face in China what you are facing today in Hong Kong. Thank you.

Chun-ying LEUNG

The experiences that we have in Hong Kong, Internet-based, so-called 'be water' approach to rally as many people as possible, to disrupt normal lives of ordinary people and ordinary businesses, large and small, in Hong Kong. It is not patented, the first trial is in Hong Kong, and whether it is going to be successful or not, and I do not wish this on any country in the world, but my guess is it will replicate itself in other countries. Hong Kong is not an island, other countries are not islands either, no man is an island; if we succumb to these violent and disruptive movements for unlawful demands on our Basic Law, other countries and other governments will suffer. That is the first point.

Point two, the central government of China, Beijing, has no role at all in the proposed amendment of the fugitive ordinance. It was initiated by the Hong Kong government; nearly all laws, except certain national laws such as nationality, national emblem, national anthem, and so on, all laws are enacted by the Hong Kong government, and that is part of the high degree of autonomy that we enjoy. It was not initiated by Beijing, Beijing has no role in that.

Point number three, this is not the first time that Hong Kong enacts a piece of legislation, amends it, or enters into a treaty with another jurisdiction to send fugitives back. Now it has been withdrawn formally in the proposed amendment. We have put in more safeguards into the proposed amendment. There are already 22 jurisdictions, in different parts of the world, I shall not name them but, if I wanted to be discourteous to some of these countries I could, the rule of law in some of these 22 jurisdictions is actually not as good as that of mainland China.

I also must ask, if people living in Hong Kong are so scared of facing trial on the mainland of China, in Shanghai, in Beijing and Chongqing, why would these cities on the mainland host millions of foreign businesspeople living there, including Hong Kong?

Let me just repeat what I said earlier; I am beginning to see signs of people, whether right or wrong, and we Chinese do not try to poke our fingers in other people's pies, we are seeing the so-called Extinction Rebellion Movement in parts of Europe copying the Hong Kong protesters so-called 'be water' approach, so be careful.

Eric LI

I cannot let that one go without two quick comments.

One, the situation in Hong Kong happens to be the greatest birthday gift God has given to President Xi Jinping for the seven-year anniversary of the People's Republic, and I will explain why. It is completely unified, it is the opposite of what you are predicting; it is a completely unified public opinion in mainland China. It is unbelievable, it is showing the Chinese people liberalisms failures and why they should not have it, so it is the opposite. Secondly, to your second point, elections are great, democracy is great, and we are all for it, but the fact is liberal democracy is no longer producing governments that respond to the will of the people. Everywhere in the world almost, I mean, you see that in public opinion poll after poll; in nine out of ten liberal-democratic countries, the elections do not deliver governments that respond to the interests and the will of the people, so maybe it does not work currently.

Arkebe OQUBAY

I would like to raise two or three questions; while Hong Kong is important, I would like this panel to focus on the other important issues also. I represent Africa, I want to listen to those questions that affect our subcontinent.

If I may ask, on the BRI, the Belt and Road Initiative, I believe it is an important project and program, and the way I see it is there has been three infrastructure miracles in this 20th century; the Suez Canal, which connected Asia and Europe; the Panama Canal, which changed the trade pattern and Eurotunnel, which connected the UK and Europe. There might have been some geopolitical impact of these infrastructures, perhaps the British had a bigger benefit with the Suez Canal and the US with the Panama Canal, but, ultimately, it was important for us to connect. My question on the infrastructure is, as it appears now, the BRI primarily focuses across Asia, Europe, and the Maritime or Silk connects to some parts of Africa. How can the BRI be designed in a way that it does not exclude Africa, and that Africa benefits from this connection?

The second point, we want to see more productive investment to Africa. Ethiopia has benefitted from Chinese manufacturing investment and, of all the investment in Ethiopia, 67% of companies are investing in manufacturing. We want to see more because we need employment; Africa needs to create 20 million jobs every single year, and that is why the G20 countries, developed Compact with Africa. We are not seeing sufficient relocation of Chinese investment, they are mainly focused in Asia, which I would say is the backyard of China, so, how can the private sector, the Chinese government, give special attention to this idea?

My last point is, there may be differences in political views, but we need to work on the common ground of the United Nations principle. We do not want any big powers to intervene in the internal affairs of African countries; non-interference is one of the basic principles of the United Nations, and I believe we have always to be reminded of this principle.

Ronnie C. CHAN

Thank you, Sir. With that, can I ask the gentleman at the back, also to ask his question and then we will answer it together. I am really in trouble, eight minutes over time, there are still two hands over there and more. Yes, Sir.

Robert DOSSOU

Merci Monsieur le modérateur. Je m'appelle Robert Dossou, je suis président de l'association africaine de droit international et ancien ministre des affaires étrangères de la République du Bénin. Vous avez interpellé l'Afrique, le représentant du premier ministre d'Ethiopie a répondu sous un aspect. Moi je donnerai ma réponse sous forme de question. Vous avez soulevé la question des Droits de l'Homme. Et je pose la question suivante : est-ce qu'un être humain, du seul fait qu'il est être humain, qu'il soit noir, vert, jaune, blanc, rouge ou couleur chocolat comme vous voulez, n'a-t-il pas de droits communs avec toute l'humanité entière ? Voilà la question. Quelles que soient les modalités de mise en œuvre.

Deuxième question sur la démocratie : est-ce que le concept de démocratie ne dégage pas ou n'est pas fondé sur des paramètres communs à toute l'humanité ? Quelles que soient les modalités de mise en œuvre. Parce qu'en Afrique, si nous examinons les instruments qui ont été adoptés en matière de Droits de l'Homme, en matière de démocratie, par l'Union Africaine et par les communautés économiques régionales, on trouve quelque chose de très fort, mais quand on les confronte à la mise en œuvre sur le terrain, on rencontre des spécificités où l'on va jusqu'à dire que la démocratie n'est pas faite pour l'Africain. On a entendu ça. Merci.

Ronnie C. CHAN

Thank you. This gentleman, then the lady at the very back, and then we have to call it quit, as we are already ten minutes over time. I want to get out of this country tomorrow, I don't want to be detained here. I need to go to work. Yes, Sir.

Mohamed LAICHOUBI

Merci, toujours l'Afrique, Laichoubi, ancien ministre de l'Algérie. Je voudrais très rapidement pour aboutir à une question qui me semble essentielle, sur le débat de la globalisation et des approches de développement, mais auparavant je voudrais faire un lien entre la session de tout à l'heure et celle de maintenant. L'acteur essentiel de la démocratie, c'est la société. L'acteur majeur de l'économie, c'est la société. Ce que nous remarquons dans les crises actuelles, Irak, Lybie, Mali, Soudan, c'est des fractures territoriales majeures, pays kurdes, Benghazi, Nord du Mali. Cela veut dire que la question de la fracture territoriale et la question des fractures sociales est un élément constitutif majeur, et du développement, et de la démocratie. Rapporté aux approches de globalisation, est-ce que derrière la grande question du financement et de l'endettement des infrastructures, le développement infrastructurel est essentiel pour un développement durable et un développement, une modernisation de société et de territoires. Or, les approches jusque-là vous l'avez dit ont été différentes. Pour les uns, on estime que cela n'est pas rentable, donc on ne finance pas, et donc il y a la question de l'endettement, encore que les Etats-Unis, sur les dernières années, ont changé totalement leur approche et leur législation sur le financement des infrastructures en Afrique. Et donc, lorsque l'on dit aux Africains, attention tel pays est en train de vous endetter, on oublie de dire que les pays en question qui soulèvent cette question ont fait de l'endettement dans l'approche de leur développement une question majeure. L'Europe est un des continents les plus endettés. Nous avons 325% d'endettement à l'échelon mondial, et beaucoup de grands, y compris le vice-président de la Banque, l'ancien vice-président de la Banque britannique dit que l'endettement menace l'Europe. Mais est-ce que derrière tout cela, il n'y a pas une question d'approche ? Quand on voit nos amis chinois ou nos amis européens sur les grandes questions, la route de la Soie ou la démarche de globalisation : pour les uns ils estiment devoir structurer la périphérie pour la moderniser, la faire aboutir à un certain niveau, pour pouvoir continuer un espace, et vous l'avez dit c'est latent, il y a un milliard en face de six milliards. Vous estimez que donc la structuration de la périphérie, la mettre à niveau est une question majeure, en partie, donc la question du financement de l'infrastructure se pose autrement que la question de l'endettement. Donc ma question : est-ce qu'il n'y a pas des approches totalement divergentes dans ce fameux débat de la globalisation, ce débat de la démocratisation, et ce débat développement ou croissance. Merci.

Ronnie C. CHAN

Thank you. The last question from the lady at the back – the man, sorry.

Steven ERLANGER

I am Steven Erlanger from *The New York Times* and I was in Hong Kong the night of the actual handover and I try to follow it. I have been very struck by the defensive tone of all of you, mixed with an aggressiveness which I find striking and common now when I hear Hong Kong Chinese and mainland Chinese speak to Western audiences. Actually, I do not think anybody cares whether China has democratic elections or not, no one is forcing you to do it, what I would like to know is do you think Xi Jinping announcing himself as Emperor for life and creating Xi Jinping thought, as an equivalent to Mao, is a good thing for China or a bad thing?

Ronnie C. CHAN

Okay, I will leave that to Eric and Mr. Leung.

Eric LI

Well, Emperor for life, certainly, he did not pronounce that, and that sounds, to me, a lot more aggressive and defensive on the part of *The New York Times*, than anything that we have ever said. I do not think that deserves a sensible response; of course, he is not Emperor for life. We had a constitutional amendment that got rid of term limits for the role of the presidency, the role of general secretary never had term limits, but we have retirement customs that are supposed to be followed, so he is not Emperor for life.

Let me come back to our friend from Ethiopia. Of course Africa is an integral and important part of the BRI vision; the Eurasian mass being united through infrastructure, and Africa being linked into that Eurasian mass, I think creates tremendous opportunities.

China is the new kid on the block, we have not been at it for very long, and we are going to make plenty of mistakes. Our companies do not know what to do in these new countries. Our companies do not know how to work with local communities, for instance, because in China, we have Party Secretary, who is like a CEO who helps the company; in these different countries the situation is completely different, so we need help. What Africa could do, and I hope it will do, is for African countries to produce great and strong leaders, like, Mr. Kagame, who will be speaking tonight; like Mr. Ahmed, perhaps, is on the way of becoming, and only with strong leaders can you take advantage of what China has to offer.

Chun-ying LEUNG

Just very quickly respond to the Belt and Road questions. If we, in Hong Kong, or we, in the rest of the country, China, could do anything to promote better mutual understanding, not just of investment opportunities in the various countries in Africa, but also what Africa is about, please let us know, we will be quite happy to oblige. I founded the Belt & Road Hong Kong Centre, for example, two years ago, and this center sponsored young school children and the teachers and headmaster and headmistresses to go and visit, excuse the term, off-the-beaten-track countries along the Belt and Road, and they all came back with new visions of life. These are the next generation of collaborators. Now, if you want to take a shorter term approach, if there are certain sectors or industries that you are open to Hong Kong or mainland Chinese investments, Sir, you have my name card, let us know.

China and Hong Kong included often gives people the impression that we have unlimited ambitions under the Belt and Road Initiative or unlimited appetite under the same incentive; the reality is, of course not. We do have capacity constraints, and one of the constraints that we face at the moment is not so much capital but human resources, and that is why it is important for us to send people to your countries to see what opportunities are. Thank you.

Eric LI

There is another question about human rights that I want to address briefly. Of course, there are universal aspirations for all mankind, it is part of the human condition, but those aspirations do not necessarily have to be liberal, and if you ascribe rights to man, these rights may be in conflict. If you read the UN declaration of universal rights, or whatever the document is called, every right in there conflicts with every other right. So what are our priorities? To me, equality is a



universal aspiration, and to me, in every country, in today's modern world, with this abundance of material wealth, we should not have people living under the absolute poverty line; it is unconscionable. To me, that is a universal aspiration, but liberalism is not delivering on these universal aspirations, and China's socialist system, I think, is doing a little better job. We make a lot of mistakes, and we have a lot of faults, we do not have these liberal elections, but we are lifting hundreds of millions of people out of poverty, in fact, we are two years away from eradicating poverty, below the absolute poverty line, about 20-30 million people left. That is a universal aspiration.

Ronnie C. CHAN

Okay, with that I am going to call it to an end, because I have been told I must cut it. Being over time, I must now go outside and commit hara-kiri, but the last sentence is, I think that it would be very important for all of us, whether you are from Europe, from Africa, from China, to bring America back to become part of the globalized world. I think the best world forward is one where, the US, Europe, China, and many other countries should work together rather than having any country, especially a major country like the United States, moving increasingly towards isolationism, and that to me is my biggest worry. So we shall leave it at that, and we will be happy to talk offline. Thank you.