

## What about the CPC's Improvement?

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According to the arrangement of the session, my presentation will refer to the reform of China, especially the intra-party reform of the CPC. In my opinion, whether to talk the role of China and its ruling party in multilateral politics, or to discuss their involvement into international society, the first question is how to view the reform in China and the party's improvement, and how to view the CPC's profile in international society. These are the prerequisite and the base of reciprocity between China and the world.

As a governing party, the Communist Party of China (CPC) is experiencing some profound changes, which are readily seen not only in the country, but also within the party itself. Some consider the CPC's change as an old political fashion, which is still under the Marxist conventionality. Others regard it as a sign that the CPC is changing its nature, even call it 'social-democratization'. All these are oversimplifications.

I have four points about this problem.

Firstly, the CPC's changes are the response to the changing world. As to be known, the realities of globalization and rapid knowledge transfer are going on. We are moving from a world of mass production to a knowledge-based economy. While high productivity manufacturing is going to play an important role in our economy, services are going to be the main generator of employment growth. In line with this trend, a great social transformation is occurring in China.

The CPC has transferred from the planning economy to the so-called 'socialist market economy' as the main response. The reform has got great successes up to now. Meanwhile many new problems have been rising. The key question is about the party, the ruling position of which is under greater and greater challenges. Thus the reform of the CPC itself is becoming the life-and-death factor related to the whole country's development. You have known the concept 'Three Represents'. It is the reply of the CPC in the changing times and becomes an everyday expression in today's political life in China.

All the theories and practices around The new economic, social and political problems emerge in the wake of globalization and the dissolution of the traditional socialist milieus in all democratic societies of today. In a highly complex and changing world of today a party need successfully cope with new problems which it meets. Taking on the challenges, the CPC feels that it's not enough to use traditional Marxist theories to explain the ongoing practices. As a result, Deng Xiaoping Theory made a reply to the socialism with Chinese characteristics in general. The 'three represents' aims at improving the CPC's ability to lead the people in the cause of building a Chinese version of socialism. Its essence is the transformation from a revolutionary party into a governing party.

Secondly, There are many similarities of the CPC's change to the SDP. In fact, under the background of globalization and rapid changes in the world, the reforms are found not only in socialist parties, but also in communist and even conservative parties; not only in concept, but also in policies and structures of these parties. Intra-party reforms become world wide popular things. It is shortening the distances among various parties. This can also be found between the CPC and the SDP. They are facing the same questions. As the ruling parties, the main problems they meet

are similar, such as relations between economy and politics, objectives and structures of the welfare state, (the system of planned economy can be seen as a kind of extremist welfare state. ) the exact meaning of equal worth of all individuals, relation between state and society with respect to the protection of the individual social rights. Just as social democratic parties, the CPC also needs get solutions for these questions. The similarity of questions led to the similarity of the way of solutions. There are many positions and views in common between the CPC and social democrats. In the process of the globalization, the requirements of changes treat all parties equally without discrimination. They need rethinking and re-inventing governance, the respective political roles of government and society. That is one of the impulses of the Third Way, and also the “Three Represents”. The modern governance requires new forms of cooperation between the actors both from governments and from civil society. It is needed to create new forms of societal politics.

The views of the CPC to a large extent are enlightened by the SDP. This is not because the CPC became inclined to the social democracy, but because they are all governing parties and facing the same challenges of globalization.

Thirdly, Although both the CPC and the SDP are promoting intra-party reforms, it is not proper to perfectly equate two kinds of reforms. There are many differences between them. It is to a large extent determined by national differences in cultural traditions and institutional arrangements. These distinctions have decided and are deciding the features and the developing trends on their own. Several differences, obviously, stemmed from the different levels of social development. For instance, the degree of the social stratification is still low in China. So we have a stronger government and a weaker society. This situation ensures that people’s requirements are on lower levels. The unbalance between government and society makes the citizenry at a disadvantageous position in the negotiation systems. Compared with the western countries, which have governments by contracts and stronger societies (unions are typical of them), it is evident.

Apart from these objective distinctions, the more important ones are on the subjective aspect. The more obvious one is that the CPC is still reserving many communist principles in its basic values. What has led the CPC to uphold the position is very comprehensive. One of them is that these principles are still accepted by common people in China. This is perfectly distinguished with the former Soviet Union. In the Soviet Union the Communist party’s rule had lasted more than seventy years. Its achievements of which the older generations were proud became increasingly insignificant to the new generations. The bases of the ruling party’s legitimacy, that is, the overthrow of the tyranny and the incapable regime depending on the mass-based support by force, have changed. The serious mistake of the CPSU is that it didn’t pay attention to the establishment of a new legitimacy for itself. Contrary to the CPSU, the CPC is facing a different situation. A number of older party members and the masses are still alive, who have got benefits directly from the CPC. They regard the party as a decisive factor keeping the stability of the society. It influences their attitudes to the party’s ideology. We find, too, the CPC particularly stresses its differences with the SPD. This phenomenon may also be associated with this context.

Fourthly, there is mutual approach between the CPC and the SDP, which show the direction of the world civilization; meanwhile on the way of this approach there are many obstacles. These obstacles play negative roles in the mutual understanding and the cooperation

between the CPC and the SDP.

For instance, one of the obstacles is the traditional mode of thinking about socialism. The traditional socialism established its theoretical basis on the planned economy, which was taken as a panacea eliminating capitalist evils. According to this thinking the ruling party and its regime became the dominant force. The whole nation became a machine for fulfillment of plan. Individual rights, including the right of thinking, weren't permitted in fact. It ensued inertia and ossification. Following the market economy, this domination has to be changed. But in many minds the inertia and ossification still remain. The return of human rights and their individual interests is habitually regarded as a 'trend of deviation from the party's leadership', and is equated to the decline of the party's role. In this circumstance, it remains possible for governmental forces to intervene in civil and private affairs by administrative means.

The another big obstacle is the cleavage between the CPC's theories and its practices. For instance, its exclusive position on the governance and its responsibility for the country's development as a ruling party requires the CPC to be a more catch-all party. But it seems that the existing theories of the party are not sufficient to demonstrate its necessity. On the contrary, according to the existing theories any catch-all idea would be looked at as 'revisionism', which is a terrible derogatory term in the minds of the rank and file of the CPC. The party has difficulties and still a long way to go to eradicate the mentality and party behavior reflecting the old practice of the paternalistic state that allegedly protected and served the interests of the working class. This old-style thinking also includes the attitudes to the SDP. Eventually, the CPC has taken more favorable assessments of the SDP, particularly since the 1990s. But the new general recognition with respect to the SDP is not formed yet. More precisely, on this issue the CPC was caught in a dilemma. If the party persisted in its negativism to the SDP, it would greatly narrow its room for the further reform, in that many experiences the SDP gained from their own reforming process could be learned and used for reference by the CPC. But if it accepted basic values of the SDP, parts of its own theory would be proved obsolete. The party would be confronted with the weakening or even the losing of its ideological legitimacy. This dilemma practically slows the reform down.

There are other obstacles I have mentioned in my article. All these obstacles make the intra-party reform difficult and complicated. The process of the CPC's reform is decided by what degree, extent and pace it can surmount these obstacles.