

## Theme : Democracy and Human Rights

**Trump signs Hong Kong human rights act as China blasts 'plainly bullying behavior'**  
CNN, November 28, 2019

US President Donald Trump on Wednesday signed a law supporting Hong Kong's months-long protest movement, handing anti-government demonstrators in the semi-autonomous Chinese city a moral victory and likely complicating trade negotiations with Beijing.

The US has long maintained a special trading relationship with Hong Kong, a semi-autonomous territory where mass protests have erupted continuously since June over perceived infringement on its autonomy by Beijing, among a host of other issues.

The new law will require the US to annually confirm that Hong Kong's special freedoms are being maintained by Beijing -- failure to do so could result in Washington withdrawing the city's special status, a massive blow to the Hong Kong economy.

The bill also lays out a process for the President to impose sanctions and travel restrictions on those who are found to be knowingly responsible for arbitrary detention, torture and forced confession of any individual in Hong Kong, or other violations of internationally recognized human rights in the Asian financial hub.

However, the US President's statement also indicated the administration would only enforce parts of the measure -- as it interferes with the President's ability to conduct foreign policy.

"Certain provisions of the Act would interfere with the exercise of the President's constitutional authority to state the foreign policy of the United States. My Administration will treat each of the provisions of the Act consistently with the President's constitutional authorities with respect to foreign relations," the White House said in a statement.

In a personal signing statement, Trump added that he had signed the bills "out of respect for President Xi (Jinping), China, and the people of Hong Kong.

"They are being enacted in the hope that Leaders and Representatives of China and Hong Kong will be able to amicably settle their differences leading to long term peace and prosperity for all."

### **Delicate time**

In a forceful statement after the bill was passed, China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) said the law "seriously interferes in Hong Kong's affairs and China's domestic politics."

"It has seriously violated international law and basic rules of international relations," the statement added. "Such plainly bullying behavior is firmly opposed by the Chinese government and Chinese people."

The ministry accused the law of seeking to "destroy prosperity and stability in Hong Kong, the great practice of 'one country, two systems,' and the historical process of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation."

Separately, the Hong Kong government called the act "unnecessary and unwarranted" and

said it "deeply regretted that the US has disregarded the genuine concerns raised repeatedly by Hong Kong."

"Although human rights and democracy are mentioned in the title of the Act, some of the provisions in the Act are actually about export control and enforcement of the sanctions imposed by the United Nations in Hong Kong, which are totally unrelated to human rights and democracy in Hong Kong," a spokesman said.

Trump's announcement comes at a delicate time for US-China relations, as trade negotiators appeared to be edging closer to a trade deal between the US and China.

On Tuesday, Chinese Vice Premier Liu He and his US counterparts, Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer and Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin, spoke on the phone to discuss trade negotiations, according to China's Ministry of Commerce.

"Both sides discussed each other's core concerns and reached a consensus on how to resolve these issues. Both sides agreed to maintain communication on the remaining matters in (trade) talks regarding a phase one agreement," the Commerce Ministry statement read.

## **China President Xi Jinping's balancing act over Hong Kong**

*CNN*, By Helen Regan, October 13, 2019

Hong Kong's summer of discontent has spilled over into fall, bringing with it tear gas, petrol bombs and widespread transport disruptions -- all the elements that have divided the city during four months of unrest.

Observers had looked to China's National Day on October 1 as a potential turning point for the protests, and since then they've escalated with protesters targeting businesses linked to mainland China.

The vandalism and violence poses a direct challenge to Chinese President Xi Jinping, who is not known for his tolerance of views that differ from the ruling Communist Party.

However, it is not clear if Beijing has a red line, and what it would take for protesters to cross it before provoking a Chinese military response.

Chinese military intervention in Hong Kong is still believed to be the last resort, as it would carry disastrous consequences for both the territory and mainland China.

But experts say the Hong Kong government's failed efforts to stop the protests by evoking emergency powers could move Hong Kong closer to a more aggressive response from Beijing.

### **Balancing Act**

Xi, who effectively made himself "president for life" by dropping presidential term limits in 2018, is China's most powerful leader since Mao Zedong.

He is set to convene a high-level Communist Party meeting later this month and will want to protect his image of a tough nationalist leader that's driving China to a more prosperous future.

"He faces potentially embarrassing questions over Hong Kong as the situation is not under control after four months," said Willie Lam, adjunct professor at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. "He cannot be appear to be weak, otherwise he will lose face."

For a few months, China embarked on a propaganda campaign and social media blitz to demonize the Hong Kong protesters. Now, all mention of the protests are blocked once again as a topic on social media in the mainland.

Chinese state media continuously reinforces its message that they are dangerous, out-of-control separatists influenced by foreign forces, and that the Chinese military or armed police could be sent in at a moment's notice to crush them.

In reality, such a response could destabilize Hong Kong and China's economy, destroy Xi's global reputation and disrupt long-term plans for political and social assimilation of Hong Kong with the mainland.

"You can send in the troops but unless you suppress the protesters with overwhelming force then you're just going to require continued occupation," said Adam Ni, a China researcher at Macquarie University in Sydney.

Experts say armed intervention in Hong Kong would also provide political leverage for Xi's factional opponents.

"There are political forces within the Chinese Communist Party that would like to see him slip up as a way to justify removing him as president for life," said Malcolm Davis, senior analyst in Defense Strategy and Capability at the Australian Strategic Policy Institute.

Xi will also be thinking of cross-strait relations with Taiwan, which have only worsened since the Hong Kong protests began in June. While Taiwan has been self-ruled since the end of the Chinese civil war in 1949, Beijing has not given up its desire for reunification through political negotiations.

"There's no way that they are going to sign up to any peaceful negotiation with the Chinese, given what's happening in Hong Kong. So ultimately, Xi may be forced into a bigger risk with Taiwan as a result of what's happening," said Davis.

## **Economy**

Analysts say if People's Liberation Army (PLA) troops or the paramilitary People's Armed Police cracked down in Hong Kong, the stock market and housing market would crash and a mass exodus would likely follow.

Hong Kong is an important global financial and business center, with foreign companies and investors seeing the city as a stable gateway to Asia.

Already, the protests are having an impact on Hong Kong's economy, but Chinese boots on the ground would seriously damage its image as a safe and open place to do business. Such instability caused by an armed intervention could prompt corporations to reconsider their investment in the city.

"It's possible that multinational companies, or companies listed on the Hong Kong stock market may think of moving to Singapore or another financial center in Asia Pacific," Lam said.

Chinese companies use the Hong Kong stock market to raise capital and many powerful Chinese elites who have invested heavily in Hong Kong would stand to lose huge amounts of money in the event of an economic collapse, Lam added.

About half of all the foreign direct investment into China last year came through Hong Kong. And a similar percentage of investment from China flowed into Hong Kong, according to the Hong Kong Trade Development Council. The figures are in the hundreds of billions of dollars.

China is also fighting a bitter trade war with the US, dealing with a slowing economy, and the strains of building the Belt and Road Initiative -- Xi's signature global infrastructure policy that aims to build new trade routes linking China to Asia, Africa and Europe.

"Hong Kong is still the major place where the Chinese economy raises cash to finance its modernization programs," Lam said. "They want to raise more money and they need Hong Kong actually more than ever."

A bloody crackdown akin to the 1989 Tiananmen massacre would also damage China's

image in the eyes of many in the region. Xi is risking sanctions and important diplomatic and economic relations being severed.

"Armed intervention in Hong Kong just adds to the narrative of a threatening China," Ni said.

Playing into Beijing's hand, however, is the power it holds over multinational companies afraid of losing lucrative business on the mainland. And Beijing has been quick to take punitive measures against companies that show support for the protests.

Hong Kong's flagship aircraft carrier Cathay Pacific has borne the brunt of Chinese pressure, which has even extended to US entities like the NBA and video game company Blizzard Entertainment who have become embroiled in disputes over Hong Kong.

### **'Can't go on forever'**

The protests, now entering their 19th weekend, have become increasingly violent and destructive, particularly following Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam's use of emergency powers on October 5 to ban face masks at public gatherings.

Police have also ramped up their response -- two protesters were shot with live ammunition on two separate occasions since October 1, marking a turning point in the four month-long civil unrest.

"They (Beijing) can't let this go on indefinitely. They can't let it continue to intensify," said Davis. "I think that we are in the stage now, where things are going to slide towards some sort of military or People's Armed Police intervention. And that could be a devastating situation for the protesters."

But no one knows where that line is. Analysts say it's still a question that Beijing is actively considering.

"It's smart not to state a clear red line because you are going to have to act on it to keep your credibility once that line has been breached. And there is every likelihood that protesters would actively seek to breach that line," Ni said.

That line could also be crossed if Beijing loses confidence in the Hong Kong government's ability to win the struggle, Ni added.

The Hong Kong government can request assistance from the Hong Kong PLA garrison "in the maintenance of public order and in disaster relief." Though analysts say China's paramilitary police -- the PAP -- who would be more likely to be deployed in Hong Kong as they are specifically trained to put down social unrest on the mainland.

At a press conference Tuesday, Chief Executive Lam said she believes the Hong Kong government "should find the solutions ourselves," but that her government could still call on Beijing for assistance.

"No options should be ruled out," she said.

Using emergency powers is one way Xi and Lam can attempt to keep a firm hand on the situation, without resorting to boots on the ground.

While invoking the Emergency Ordinance Regulation to pass an anti-mask ban did nothing to quell the protests, it does allow police to make more arrests, said Lam, the Hong Kong politics expert.

"Overall, the order from Beijing is the Hong Kong government should apply the rules more stringently and make more arrests. And, if a sizable number of ringleaders are arrested then it will help the Lam administration to restore order sooner," he said.

Since the protests began, 2,363 people between the ages of 12 and 83 have been arrested, and 77 since the mask law came into effect, according to Hong Kong police.

Lam added that more draconian measures could be enacted under emergency powers, if protests continue to intensify.

But there is little sign protesters will stop any time soon and the mask ban has only added fuel to the fire. As far back as August, some radical protesters said they welcomed a crackdown and were "ready for it," no matter the costs to the city and potentially the movement itself.

"The fundamental contradiction here at the heart of this unfolding crisis is that, on the one hand you have Hong Kongers wanting to maintain Hong Kong's autonomy as promised when the territory was handed over to China by the UK. And on the other is Beijing's desire to tighten Hong Kong's institutions, reduce its autonomy and integrate it into PRC's political systems," Ni said.

Lam, the Hong Kong politics expert, said Xi will be hoping that public opinion will soon swing away from the protesters and the more hardcore elements of the movement, if the violence and vandalism further disrupt daily life.

But if the waiting game doesn't pan out, Xi may be forced to put the future strength and stability of the party ahead of potentially severe economic consequences.

"I don't see this ending peacefully, I don't see both sides, stepping back from the brink," China analyst Davis said.

## **China slams US legislation on human rights in Hong Kong**

*The Financial Times*, November 26, 2019

### *Beijing accuses Washington of interfering in internal affairs*

Beijing's top foreign affairs official has slammed US legislation on Hong Kong that could lead to the revocation of trade and other commercial privileges Washington currently extends to the semi-autonomous Chinese territory.

Yang Jiechi, who also sits on the Chinese Communist party's 25-member politburo, told the official Xinhua news agency that passage of the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act "grossly interfered" in China's internal affairs.

Mr Yang was speaking just hours after China's foreign ministry summoned the US ambassador to Beijing to complain about the bill and a day after pro-democracy candidates swept to victory in Hong Kong's local council elections.

The city has been rocked by an increasingly violent protest movement that began in June in opposition to an extradition bill that could have seen criminal suspects sent to mainland China for the first time. The protests have expanded to include demands for democratic elections for the territory's chief executive and legislature.

The Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act, which has been passed by both the House and Senate, is expected to become law in the coming days even if US president Donald Trump does not formally sign it.

"[The act] has seriously harmed China's interests and seriously undermined Hong Kong's prosperity and stability," Mr Yang was quoted as saying. "The top priority for Hong Kong is to stop violence and restore order."

The Chinese government has ramped up its rhetoric against the act, as party-controlled state media struggle to explain the results of Sunday's district council elections. In Hong Kong and international media, the results were seen as a referendum on the how authorities have handled the crisis in the city.

Lau Siu-kai, head of the Chinese Association of Hong Kong and Macau Studies, a Beijing-backed think-tank in Hong Kong, said voters were "venting their anger" at the administration of chief executive Carrie Lam and Beijing.

"Pro-establishment [political parties] have lost a lot of political capital by supporting the government," he said.

Chinese state media initially touted the high voter turnout — in excess of 70 per cent — as a signal that a previously "silent majority" of Hong Kong residents were strongly opposed to the tactics used by "frontline" protesters. In the latest surge of violence earlier this month, university students and teenagers fought pitched battles with police at Hong Kong's largest universities. The last of these, at Hong Kong Polytechnic University, has not yet ended, with a small group of protesters believed to be hiding inside the campus.

But as the extent of the pro-democracy camp's victory became apparent, seizing control of 17 or 18 district councils, state media outlets refrained from reporting the results.

“It was a big surprise for Beijing that the pro-establishment camp suffered such a huge defeat,” said Wei Leijie, a law professor at Xiamen University. “It is a wake-up call.”

## Vocabulary from the articles

to hand in : rendre / remettre / dénoncer (à la police)  
trade : commerce  
infringement : atteinte / infraction / violation / utilisation abusive  
to fail to : échouer à  
to result in : entraîner / provoquer / avoir pour conséquence  
to withdraw : retirer  
to lay out : disposer / arranger / étendre / exposer  
hub : centre / plaque tournante / plateforme  
to enforce : faire appliquer / faire respecter / imposer  
foreign policy : politique étrangère  
statement : déclaration  
amicably : à l'amiable  
to settle differences : régler un différend  
forceful : énergique / déterminé / percutant  
to seek to : chercher à  
rejuvenation : rajeunissement / ranimation  
unwarranted : injustifié / déplacé  
genuine : véritable / authentique  
to edge closer to : se rapprocher de  
discontent : mécontentement / insatisfaction  
mainland : continent / métropole  
to challenge : contester / défier  
last resort : dernier recours  
to convene : rassembler  
blitz : attaque surprise  
to demonize : diaboliser  
to crush : écraser  
to disrupt : perturber  
overwhelming : accablant  
leverage : levier / influence / avantage  
to worsen : empirer  
to remove : retirer / enlever / éliminer  
gateway : entrée / porte (sur/de)  
investment : investissement  
to stand to lose : avoir beaucoup à perdre  
(ex : to stand to reason : tomber sous le sens)  
bitter : amer / cinglant / acharné  
crackdown : répression  
to sever : sectionner / couper  
brunt : le plus gros / le plus fort (*main impact*)  
to embroil : mêler / impliquer  
to breach : transgresser / violer / ouvrir une brèche  
disaster relief : aide humanitaire  
stringent : strict / rigoureux  
to enact : promulguer / décréter  
to add fuel to the fire : jeter de l'huile sur le feu  
to pan out : marcher comme prévu / bien tourner  
the brink : le bord  
to step back : reculer  
to summon : convoquer / faire venir / appeler / rassembler

to be rocked : ébranlé / secoué  
to undermine : miner / saper / ébranler / discréditer  
to handle : gérer  
media outlet : organe de presse  
to refrain from : s'abstenir de  
wake-up call : signal d'alarme / coup de semonce / déclic / électrochoc

### **Thematic vocabulary : Human rights**

inalienable rights : droits inaliénables (*that cannot be taken away*)  
the right to life : le droit à la vie  
sanctity of life: le caractère sacré de la vie  
due process of law : application régulière de la loi / respect scrupuleux de la loi  
deprivation > to deprive someone of something  
ethnic cleansing : épuration ethnique  
to prohibit : interdire  
to ensure : assurer / garantir  
self-determination : autodétermination  
empowerment : émancipation  
to empower people with : autoriser / habilitier ... à ...  
to be entitled to : avoir droit à  
to support a cause : soutenir une cause  
to undermine a cause : ébranler une cause  
to seek asylum > chercher refuge / demander asile (an asylum seeker)  
endowed : doté / accordé / conféré  
emancipation : émancipation / affranchissement  
affirmative action : discrimination positive  
child labor : travail infantile  
child abuse : maltraitance / exploitation des enfants  
domestic violence : violence conjugale  
marital rape : viol conjugal  
fairness : équité / justice / impartialité  
privacy : vie privée  
welfare : bien-être  
to champion : défendre / soutenir  
human rights advocate : défenseur/militant des droits de l'homme  
to divest : priver  
encroachment : empiètement  
to emancipate : émanciper  
to outlaw : proscrire / rendre hors-la-loi  
egalitarian : égalitaire  
substantive rights : droits fondamentaux  
fair trial : procès équitable  
civil liberties: libertés civiles  
common good : l'intérêt général  
equity : équité  
to safeguard democracy : garantir / protéger la démocratie  
recognition : reconnaissance  
to promote dignity : promouvoir la dignité  
to curtail civil rights : restreindre les droits civiques  
to deny education : nier le droit à l'éducation  
to take action against : prendre des mesures à l'encontre

to stand up against : résister à  
to grant : accorder  
to suffer abuse from : subir / endurer  
starvation : famine  
bribery : corruption  
color blind : sans préjugé racial  
equal opportunity : égalité des chances  
to take away (from) : retirer / enlever / confisquer  
to uphold : faire respecter / maintenir  
undue : injustifié / injuste  
to discriminate against : discriminer  
citizenship : citoyenneté  
to be sentenced to : être condamné à  
freedom of thought : liberté de pensée  
equal protection of the law : protection équitable des lois / égale protection de la loi  
false imprisonment : séquestration / détention arbitraire

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