



CARRIE LAM, CHINA-HONG KONG DUAL SYSTEM AND THE STRUGGLE FOR AUTONOMY: A DIPLOMATIC ANALYSIS

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Abstract

Carrie Lam, the fourth Chief Executive was “Too Pro-China” to insist on the autonomy or enhance the struggle of Hong Kong for autonomy as proposed by the 1997 China’s promises to the United Kingdom, Hong Kong and the international community, that it would operate a “One Nation-Two Systems” for fifty years, ending in 2047. The last twenty-five years have been characterized by broken promises, failed covenants, unnecessary political meddling, judicial undercutting, press gagging and restrictions on freedom of speech leading to protests, advocacy, instability and political tension in the territory. The UK which should have intervened by reminding China of the July 1, 1997 pledges and accord and in absolute terms compel China to uphold the agreements, has been burdened by socio-political, economic and domestic challenges. China has taken advantage of UK’s domestic problems and political instability to violate the agreements over Hong Kong. This article argues that the people of Hong Kong were aware of/already sensed a consistent decline in China’s resolve to allow freedom of speech, democracy, freedom of the press, uninterrupted judicial process, fundamental human rights and the British educational system. This article concludes that while the UK kept her promise to transfer HK to China after Ninety-Nine years (1898-1997). China has refused to keep to the post transfer treaty. The covenant of fifty years has been broken almost immediately after it was signed. The UK on the other hand has broken the ethical/moral covenant to keep China on the covenant lane. Aside pockets of condemnations, no sanctions have been recommended or applied for failure or default by China. This paper is essentially a field research with reliance on primary and secondary sources of data in published outlets such as journals and online articles, newspaper interviews, and books. Its scope is limited to issue and content analysis of Hong Kong’s struggle to make China keep her promises. The study adopts the Kant’s Struggle for Autonomy as a theoretical guide. It captures the essence of the struggles in Hong Kong.

Keywords

Autonomy, “One Nation-Two Systems”, Carrie Lam, Sino-British Joint Declaration, Broken Promises

INTRODUCTION (Background to the Development of Hong Kong)

Hong Kong, officially named the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China, (HKSARPRC) is an autonomous territory on the Pearl River Delta of China. (Hong Kong Gazette, 1926) Macau lies across the delta to the west, and the province of Guangdong borders the territory to the north. With a total land area of 1,106 square kilometres (427 sq mi) and a population of over 7.374 million of various nationalities (Official Figures of the 2016 Hong Kong Census) Hong Kong ranks as the world's fourth most densely populated sovereign state or territory (Fairbank, 1953) Its official name, the "Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China" is the official title as mentioned in the Hong Kong Basic Law and the Hong Kong Government's website; (Website of the Government of Hong Kong) however, "Hong Kong Special Administrative Region" or "Hong Kong" are widely accepted and used not only by China but the international community.

Hong Kong is constituted of 93.6% Chinese and 6.4% other nationalities yet almost 80% of the 7.4m people speak both the Chinese and English Language to an appreciable level to the extent that both languages have been adopted as the official language of the territory.

Hong Kong is one of the world's most significant financial centres, with the highest Financial Development Index score and consistently ranks as the world's most competitive and freest economic entity (The IMD, 2016). As

the world's 8th largest trading entity, its legal tender, the Hong Kong dollar, is the world's 13th most traded currency. HK is also a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC). HK's tertiary sector dominated economy is characterised by simple taxation with a competitive level of corporate tax and supported by its independent judiciary system (Triennial Central Bank Survey, 2016). However, while Hong Kong has one of the highest per capita incomes in the world, it suffers from severe income inequality (Hong Kong Economy, 2018). This inequality is very obvious in Hong Kong and some of the residents blame the intervention and interruption of China in their affairs for the widening gap (Hong Kong Economy, 2018).

Hong Kong is renowned for its deep natural harbour, which enables ready access by international cargo ships, and its impressive skyline, with a very high density of skyscrapers (Vertical Cities, 2018). The territory boasts of the second highest number of high rises of any city in the world (Hong Kong Economy, 2018). According to Emporis, there are 1,223 skyscrapers in Hong Kong, which puts the city at the top of world rankings. It has more buildings taller than 500 feet (150 m) than any other city. The high density and tall skyline of Hong Kong's urban area is due to a lack of available sprawl space, with the average distance from the harbour front to the steep hills of Hong Kong Island at 1.3 km, more than half of it reclaimed land. This lack of space logically causes demand for dense, high-rise offices and housing. Thirty-six (36) of the world's 100 tallest residential buildings are in Hong Kong. More people in Hong Kong live or work above the 14th floor than anywhere else in the world, so it is the world's most vertical city. It has a very high Human Development Index ranking and the world's longest life expectancy. Over 90% of the population make use of well-developed public transportation (Public Transport Introduction, 2008). Seasonal air pollution with origins from neighbouring industrial areas of mainland China, which adopts loose emissions standards, has resulted in a high level of atmospheric particulates. This has worsened since the 1997 handover from UK to China because of Chinese control over HK: This is a major concern for HK residents.

Hong Kong's education system understandably follows the system in the UK, even though international systems exist (Gaylord, Mark; Gittings, Traver, 2009). Despite the Ninety-Nine years of British rule, the government maintains a policy of "mother tongue instruction" (Chinese) in which the medium of instruction is Cantonese with written Chinese and English, while some of the schools (international schools) adopt the use of English as the teaching language. In the secondary schools, 'bi-literate and trilingual' proficiency is emphasised, and Mandarin-language education has been increasing in the city. Consequently, the Programme for International Student Assessment ranked Hong Kong's education system as the second best in the world (The Programme for International Student Assessment).

There are eight public universities and one private university in Hong Kong, the oldest being the University of Hong Kong (HKU), established in 1910–1912 (University of Hong Kong). The Chinese University of Hong Kong was founded in 1963 to fulfil the need for a university with a medium of instruction of Chinese (University of Hong Kong). Competition among students to receive an offer for an undergraduate programme is fierce as the annual number of intakes is limited, especially when some disciplines such as medicine are offered by select tertiary institutions and two medical schools in the territory, the Li KaShing Faculty of Medicine at the University of Hong Kong and the Faculty of Medicine of the Chinese University of Hong Kong. This is a major concern in the territory.

In the Health sector, there are 13 private hospitals and more than 40 public hospitals in Hong Kong. There is little interaction between public and private healthcare, the hospitals offer a wide range of healthcare services, and some of the territory's private hospitals are considered to be world class. According to UN estimates, Hong Kong has one of the longest life expectancies of any country or territory in the world. As of 2012, Hong Kong women were the longest living demographic group in the world (Life Expectancy, 2012). On 1 July, 2017, the day of the 20th anniversary of Hong Kong's handover from Britain to China, Lam was sworn in to office by Chinese leader, Xi Jinping. "Hong Kong, our home, is suffering from quite a serious divisiveness and has accumulated a lot of frustrations. My priority will be to heal the divide," (Lam, Acceptance Speech, 2017).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In *Kant's Struggle for Autonomy: On the Structure of Practical Reason*, Raef Zreik presents an original synoptic view of Kant's practical philosophy, uncovering the relatively hidden architectonics of Kant's system and critically engaging with its broad implications. He begins by investigating the implicit strategy that guides Kant in making the distinctions that establish the autonomous spheres: happiness, morality, justice, public order-legitimacy. The organizing principle of autonomy sets these spheres apart, assuming there is self-sufficiency for each sphere. Zreik then develops a critique of this strategy, showing its limits, its costs, and its inherent instability. He questions self-sufficiency and argues that autonomy is a matter of ongoing struggle between the forces of separation and unification. (Zreik, 2022)

Raef Zreik shows that Kant's use of the concept of autonomy as the underlying principle of both theoretical and practical philosophy has to be distinguished from the idea of autonomous domains of virtue,

happiness, and law within practical philosophy. He argues carefully and convincingly that the idea of autonomy is crucial to Kant's approach to each of these domains but that to think of them as completely separate from each other is a mistake that undermines the unity of Kant's own philosophy and a coherent approach to practical philosophy in general. This is the most extensive and thorough interpretation and critique of Kant's use of the concept of autonomy I know (Guyer, 2022). Hong Kong may not essentially be making case for "Sovereignty" but "Autonomy" as prescribed by the Chinese/UK agreement on the handover date on July 1, 1997.

CARRIE LAM

Carrie Lam, the first female leader in the former British colony of Hong Kong was born on May 13, 1957 in Hong Kong. She attended St. Francis' Canossian School and College for 13 years, then proceeded to the University of Hong Kong, where she graduated with a Bachelor degree in Social Science graduating in 1980. Immediately after her graduation, Carrie began working for the Hong Kong Government Administration (HKGGA). In the course of her career, she was sent to Great Britain to attend a Development Studies Diploma (DSD) course at the Cambridge University from 1981 to 1982. It was there in Cambridge she met a Mathematician Lam Siu-por, who later became her husband in 1984. They have two sons; both were educated in Britain. On her return to the UK after the DSD programme, Carrie Lam held numerous public service positions in such areas as health, welfare and finance. She ascended to higher-level positions in the 2000s, including director of social welfare (2000–03), secretary for housing, planning, and lands (2003–04) and head of the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office (2004–06), before rising to the level of principal official; a senior-level politically appointed position, when she was named secretary of development in 2007. Throughout her years of service, Lam earned a reputation as being tough, hardworking and a perfectionist.

Lam returned to Hong Kong in 2006. The following year, she renounced her British nationality. She was a dual Chinese-British citizen and became the city's secretary for development. Her husband and two sons also hold UK passports.

Lam, who describes herself as a devout Catholic, took office in 2017 with a pledge to unite a city that was growing increasingly resentful of Beijing's tightening grip, said on Monday at a regular press briefing: "There's only one consideration and that is family. I have told everyone before that family is my first priority in terms of my consideration. They think it's time for me to go home." In 2012 Lam was named chief secretary for administration. While in this post one of her tasks was heading up a committee on Constitutional Reforms which included examining how Hong Kong's Chief Executive and Legislative Council (LegCo) should be elected.

The reform effort of primary concern to Hong Kong citizens was consideration for the ability to directly elect Hong Kong's chief executive, an option provided for under Hong Kong's governing Basic Law but different from the current method of having the 1,200-member Election Committee electing someone to fill that position. The proposal put forth in August 2014 by Lam's committee and approved by Beijing was for Hong Kongers to directly elect the chief executive but only from a slate of candidates approved by the mainland government. Without the ability to openly nominate candidates, this proposal fell short of the desired level of universal suffrage and sparked months of pro-democracy sit-ins and demonstrations, referred to as Occupy Central and the Umbrella Movement. LegCo voted on the proposal in June 2015, and, to Lam's disappointment, it was soundly defeated.

Lam resigned as chief secretary in January 2017 in order to stand for the position of chief executive. She was elected to the post in March, receiving 777 votes out of 1,194 from Hong Kong's Election Committee, and was sworn in on July 1, 2017. As the top executive in the HKSAR administration, Lam soon faced more challenges related to the increasingly difficult act of balancing Hong Kongers' demands for democratic reform and protections for their autonomy with the will of China's mainland government.

The introduction of the very unpopular extradition bill in 2019 which Carrie Lam supported evoked much criticism, condemnation from various quarters and led to months of protests. The bill, which would permit the extradition of Hong Kong citizens to mainland China, had many in the HKSAR fearing it would infringe on their political freedoms and be used to intimidate those critical of the mainland government. China had not shown appreciable respect for the freedom of the Hong Kong citizens to freely choose their leaders. Lam initially refused to withdraw or alter the bill, although she later reversed course and suspended it in June in the face of growing condemnation, protests and violence. The bill's suspension was not enough to calm the unrest, therefore, the protesters continued to call for the bill to be fully withdrawn, among other demands. Some very critical opinion leaders and professionals also called for her outright resignation.

In September Lam announced that the bill would be formally withdrawn, which it was in October. Demonstrations continued, however, having by this time taken on a broader pro-democracy tone. Popular support for the protesters' sentiments was evident in the decisive victory of pro-democracy groups in the local elections, held in November. Lam admitted that their victory reflected dissatisfaction with her administration and promised to listen to their concerns. The election was indeed a referendum on her administration.

Tensions were still simmering when Lam was faced with another crisis: in May 2020 the mainland China government announced that it would impose a national security law on Hong Kong, completely bypassing LegCo.

While Lam welcomed the announcement and promised to work with Beijing in the implementation of the new law, the announcement stoked fear among Hong Kong's pro-democracy activists and residents. The law would criminalize acts such as sedition, secession and subversion. People feared that it could be broadly interpreted by authorities to quell protests and other forms of dissent against the Chinese government and to reduce Hong Kong's autonomy. In defending the proposed law before it was passed, Lam maintained that it would not affect the rights of Hong Kongers. It was indeed implemented effective from June 30, 2020. Her term as the city's chief executive ended on 30 June, 2020 concluding her career as a civil servant that began in UK controlled Hong Kong in 1980. She told the press that she had informed (China) Beijing one year ahead about her desire to step down after her current term, and that Beijing was receptive.

In December 2019, Lam admitted the difficulties in running Hong Kong. In an interview with the state-owned Global Times, she said the past four years or so might have been the most challenging for Hong Kong since its handover to China in 1997 (Lam, 2020). Lam's tenure was marked by controversies and scandals: In 2019, for example, as hundreds of thousands of protesters flocked to the streets to demonstrate against a proposed, then withdrawn, extradition treaty with mainland China, Lam warned activists not to push Hong Kong into an "abyss". She told the people that she was not a "sell-out" or Beijing's "puppet" in a tearful TV interview. (Lam 2021) The following year, Beijing imposed a hugely controversial national security law in the territory, which banned acts of secession, subversion, terrorism and collusion with foreign forces. Protesters in 2019 hold pictures of Carrie Lam during a march against the proposed amendments to an extradition law. (Photograph: Kin Cheung/AP)

All efforts by Lam to make the Hon Kongers see her as an Administrator per excellence and not a stooge, or oppressor did not gin extensive currency.

THE CHINA-HONG KONG DUAL SYSTEM

"One country, two systems" is a constitutional principle of the People's Republic of China (PRC) describing the governance of the Special Administrative Regions of Hong Kong and Macau. The constitutional principle was formulated in the early 1980s during negotiations over Hong Kong between China and the United Kingdom. It provided that there would be only One China but that the regions could retain their own economic and administrative systems, while the rest of the mainland China will retain the socialism with Chinese characteristics system. Under the principle, each of the two regions could continue to have its own governmental system, legal, economic and financial affairs, including trade relations with foreign countries, (Para-Diplomacy) all of which are independent from those of the Mainland China. The PRC has also proposed to apply the principle in the unification it aims for Taiwan in the foreseeable future.

Hong Kong until the July 1, 1997 handover, was a colony of the United Kingdom (Great Britain), ruled by a Governor appointed by the British Monarch for a period of 156 years from 1841 (except for four years of the Japanese occupation during WWII until 1997, when it was reverted to Chinese sovereignty. China agreed to accept some conditions, as is stipulated in the Sino-British Joint Declaration such as the drafting and adoption of Hong Kong's "mini-constitution" Basic Law before its return. The Hong Kong Basic Law ensured that Hong Kong will retain its capitalist economic system and own currency (the Hong Kong Dollar, the legal system, legislative system and same human rights and freedoms, as a Special Administrative Region (SAR) of China for 50 years. Set to expire in 2047, the current arrangement has permitted Hong Kong to function as its own entity under the name "Hong Kong, China" in many international settings like the World Trade Organization and the Olympics. (Boland, Rory, 2014)

The Chinese renminbi is not legal tender in Hong Kong. Likewise, the Hong Kong dollar is not accepted in stores in mainland China. With this arrangement, a permit or special visa is required when passing between the borders of Hong Kong and mainland China, and people in Hong Kong hold Hong Kong SAR rather than the Chinese Passports. The official language are a major factor besides the history of the former colony that has made Hong Kong and mainland China distinct from each other, as Cantonese and English are the most widely used languages in Hong Kong, while Mandarin is the official language of mainland China. The central government in Beijing maintains control over Hong Kong's foreign affairs as well as the legal interpretation of the Basic Law. The latter has led democracy advocates and some Hong Kong residents to argue that the territory has yet to achieve Universal Suffrage as promised by the Basic Law, leading to mass demonstrations in 2014.

However, since 2020, as a result of the passage of the National Security Law by Hong Kong on 30 June, 2020, the United States and United Kingdom condemned the Chinese government of seriously breaching the principle and thus consider Hong Kong to have reverted to a *de facto* "one country, one system" status. One major agreement of China authorities with the UK government before the July 1, 1997 handover was to allow Hong Kong some measure of autonomy which has now assumed a very controversial phenomenon. Indeed, a member of the Protests Organizing committee who opted to remain anonymous submitted that China never intended to respect the agreement from Day 1. (Anonymous, 2021). The influence of Hong Kong in the structure has been corroded to the level of extensive interference from the mainland China in practically every conceivable governance, area: legal, economic, social and educational. This was the main thrust of the agitations and restiveness in Hong Kong.

Unfortunately, China is not considering adjusting the policies in Hong Kong suggesting concessions and reconciliations.

THE STRUGGLE FOR AUTONOMY

The struggle or agitation for autonomy should not have been warranted or necessitated in the first instance had China (Beijing) been committed to the pre hand-over agreement between China and the United Kingdom and by extension the international community, unfortunately, the agreement that was originally intended to run for fifty years was dishonoured by China from the beginning. Although "one country, two systems" guarantees that Hong Kong's economic and political systems would not be changed for 50 years after the British handover in 1997, the Mainland Affairs Council of the Republic of China has cited 218 cases between 1997 and 2007 in which they claim the PRC has breached the right of the people of Hong Kong to self-rule and severely intervened in the judicial system as well as freedom of speech (Analysis Report, 2018)

In July 2018, the Hong Kong Police Force unprecedentedly served the convenor of the pro-independence Hong Kong National Party Chan Ho-tin a notice under the Societies Ordinance and sought to ban the Party. The police claimed that the party has engaged in sedition and that the party may be banned on grounds of national security with respect to Chinese territorial integrity. The notice contained highly detailed surveillance material on the party leadership's public engagements. On 24 October 2018, Chan Ho-tin and party spokesman Jason Chow Ho-fai filed appeals against the ban with the Chief Executive and Executive Council. The two filed separate appeals to make clear they were acting as individuals, not as a party. (Lum, Alvin 2018)

In August, a controversy erupted in 2018 when the Foreign Correspondents' Club (FCC) hosted a lunchtime talk with Chan Ho-tin on 14 August. A Financial Times journalist Victor Mallet, vice-chairman of the press organisation, chaired the session. ((Lum, Alvin 2018) The event was opposed by the governments of China and Hong Kong, because the issue of independence supposedly crossed one of the "bottom lines" on national sovereignty. (Financial Time. 8 October 2018) Upon returning to Hong Kong after a visit to Bangkok, Mallet was denied a working visa by the Hong Kong government. (Financial Time. 8 October 2018) Mallet was subjected to a four-hour interrogation by immigration officers on his return from Thailand on Sunday 7 October before he was finally allowed to enter Hong Kong on a seven-day tourist visa. (South China Morning Post. 9 November 2018). Carrie Lam refused to make any comment, only stating that the Immigration Department was not obliged to explain individual cases. The massive anti-government protest was cracked down following the implementation of the National Security Law by China, crushing dissidents and forcing the disband of civic groups. With the opposition being silenced and removing governing obstacles, Lam's cabinet was reshuffled twice in 2020 and 2021 promoting hardliners from the police, such as Chris Tang and John Lee further instigating the concerns of transforming Hong Kong into a Police State. New policies did not enjoy much popularity still, including requiring oath-taking pledging allegiance to China, vetting politicians, pushing for national security education and placing pandemic restrictions. Lam announced not to campaign for re-election in April, paving way for John Lee, the Chief Secretary promoted by Lam and a former police, to succeed after receiving blessing from China. Her ties to the United Kingdom, which accused her of suppressing Hong Kong's democracy movement, go back a long way as well. In 2004, she was the director-general of the Hong Kong economic and trade office in London, the city's top representative to the United Kingdom.

External Reactions to the Struggle for Autonomy

The struggle or agitation for autonomy in Hong Kong has not gone without reactions and sanctions from the international community. Several states in the international system have condemned (China) Beijing's moves and taken retaliatory measures in reaction to the position of China in relation to the handover mandate.

Under President Donald Trump, the United States imposed sanctions on Chinese officials it alleged were undermining Hong Kong's autonomy, restricted exports of defence equipment to Hong Kong, and revoked its special trade status. It also joined a handful of countries, including Australia, Canada, and New Zealand, that suspended their extradition treaties with Hong Kong because of the national security law. President Joe Biden has maintained the sanctions, voiced concerns about Beijing's crackdown in conversations with Chinese leader Xi Jinping, and warned U.S. companies of the great risk

An August 2019 article in the Washington Post reported that mainland Chinese state-run media portrayed the protests as extremely violent demonstrations, plotted by "Foreign Hostile Forces" (FHF) including United States Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi and the CIA. (Fang, 2019) A September 2019 article published in the Index of Censorship reported that China was spinning its version of the Hong Kong protests to control the news (Kan, 2019). A November 2019 article in Deutsche Welle said that Mainland Chinese state run media reporting the Hong Kong protests had sharply criticized the protesters' actions and blamed Western media for what they said was its biased reporting. (Deutsche Welle). A June 2020 academic paper compared the discursive constructions of the Hong Kong protests in CNN and China Daily submitting that the mainstream Chinese media supported China's bid to influence global opinion favourable to its undertakings. (Ayson, 2020)

A September 2019 article from Asia Times reported that international media outside of China have been overwhelmingly sympathetic to the movement to the point of strengthening the Chinese government's desire to control Hong Kong. (Hong, 2019)

Another December 2019 report from the politically progressive media watchdog Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR) said that US corporate media disproportionately focused on the Hong Kong protests with a single-minded narrative, while ignoring far more violent unrests around the world (*MacLeod, 2019.*) Carrie Lam in a CNBC interview, as well as several Chinese media reports, cited the report as part of her accusation of foreign involvement behind the protests (Cheng, 2020)

A May 2020 academic paper described the Western coverage of the anti-government protests and its influence on Western politics as an example of “Mediatization”. The study cited the political “Orientalism” of Western media, the colonial heritage of Hong Kong, and the Mainland Chinese media's clumsy dismissals of the protests as factors for the sympathy and attention given to the Hong Kong protestors by Western media (*Vukovich, 2020*)

CONCLUSION

It is very obvious from the above diplomatic analysis and historical narrative, that the struggle for autonomy by the Hong Kong territory should not have been necessary in the first place, had China stood firm and demonstrated unwavering commitment to the agreement it signed with the United Kingdom and by extension, the international community at the handover of Hong Kong to China on July 1, 1997 after 99 years of effective occupation with the exception of the Japanese interloping take-over during the second world war. (1939-1945)

Paradoxically, while the UK was faithful to a 100 (99) year agreement, China was unable to keep a 50 year agreement. In less than 25 years, Hong Kong has been thrown into the dark era of needless struggles arising from Chinese flagrant disregard for an agreement it willingly signed on July 1, 1997: these violations are noticeable from suppressed media, frustrated democratic privileges, violation of free movement, free speeches. Carrie Lam came to office pledging to unite Hong Kong, but she will leave accused of being a divisive leader of a politically turbulent city.

As the PRC moves deeper into the post-Deng era, prospects are good that China will continue to pursue relatively non-disruptive inclusion in the international legal order, even though it is unlikely to become a model of compliance with international law in the foreseeable future. While history still matters, it has not been static or devoid of trajectories conducive to China's working with established international legal regimes.

Before 1997: Policy, Strategy and Public Opinion unprecedented in the history of mankind, the policy of “one country, two systems” was designed primarily to achieve the dual objectives of preserving a prosperous Hong Kong while securing China's wider national interests of territorial sovereignty. Mooted in the early 1980s, its ultimate goal was to provide a framework with which to resolve the Taiwan question. The basic ideas of the policy, which were further defined in the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) promulgated in 1990, are: Adhering to one country and safeguarding national sovereignty; Upholding the arrangement of keeping the system basically unchanged and; · Safeguarding stability and prosperity. A three-part strategy governing this unique formula was adopted. First, Hong Kong's Basic Law, binding on both the SAR and China, was enacted to separate the two systems. Under the mini-constitution, the SAR is empowered to handle domestic matters with a high degree of autonomy while Beijing retains power over defence and foreign affairs. The delineation of powers is designed to prevent mainland interference. Secondly, a minimalist approach is taken to realize the concept of “one country.” This is symbolized by, among others, a new flag and emblem, and Beijing's role in the appointment of the SAR's chief executive and other principal officials. Thirdly, there is a general understanding and recognition of the need for tolerance when dealing with differences that may emerge between the two systems in handling practical problems. The June 4 massacre in 1989 changed the mind-set of Chinese leaders. Shocked by mass protests in Hong Kong, they inserted a provision in the Basic Law to shield the mainland from subversive threats from Hong Kong, known as Article 23. Moreover, Hong Kong domestic confidence in Beijing was shattered. With images of the bloody crackdown fresh in the people's collective consciousness, pessimists argued that the communist regime is by nature authoritarian. It demands control, and desires absolute control. It has no appetite for Western values, or internationally accepted norms of civil rights and liberties, nor does it have a free press or mechanisms for governmental checks and balances. These are the factors responsible for the struggles, protests, distrust and disappointments in Hong Kong.

Recommendation

From the above reports and findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

- China to show commitment to the original agreement with the UK, Hong Kong and by extension the International community on the “On Country-Two Systems” mandate which was ab-initio expected to guarantee autonomy to Hong Kong for fifty years in the first instance after which the territory will be allowed to undertake a

plebiscite or referendum on their future after the fifty years.

- The international community led by the United Kingdom should unite behind Hong Kong in compelling China to abide by the handover mandate she willingly signed with the UK and publicly declared on July 1, 1997.
- The Hong Kongers should diplomatically negotiate Beijing in a strategic engagement of the need to respect their autonomy with.

On the whole, the leadership of Carrie Lam in Hong Kong did close to nothing to advance the rights of individuals in Hong Kong as enshrined in the Handover Notes but not guaranteed by the Chinese authorities. Rather, Carrie Lam in her leadership styles and postures would rather please the Chinese authorities that adhere to the principles.

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