



Forum: Security Council

Question of: Hong Kong–Mainland China conflict

Student Officer:

Introduction

Hong Kong has been under British rule until 1997 when a handover between United Kingdom and People's Republic of China happened over Hong Kong. Hong Kong, different from Mainland China, has a free economy with foreign interest. Hong Kong used to have a crucial role at China's GDP thus makes Hong Kong highly important in Beijing's eyes. With a massive growth in China's economy in latest decades, Hong Kong lost its importance. That is when, 2014, separation movements started in Hong Kong. China, used its power to suppress the movement similar to Uighur Turks' Movement for freedom.

Definition of Key Terms

Special Administrative Region: The Special Administrative Regions are Hong Kong and Macau, two relatively autonomous regions within the People's Republic of China that maintain separate legal, administrative, and judicial systems from the rest of the country.

Mainland China: Mainland China, also called the Chinese Mainland, is the part of China not including the Republic of China controlling Taiwan, Kinmen, Matsu, and the Pescadores. The term also excludes Hong Kong and Macau.

One Country Two Systems: "One country, two systems" is a constitutional principle describing the governance of Hong Kong and Macau since they became regions of China in 1997 and 1999, respectively. The two SARs of Hong Kong and Macau are responsible for their domestic affairs including, but not limited to, the judiciary and courts of last resort, immigration and customs, public finance, currencies and extradition. Important cultural effects are exemption of the SARs from mainland laws mandating the use of simplified characters in publishing and Mandarin in public education and most broadcasting. The diplomatic relations and military defense of the two SARs however, is the responsibility of the Central People's Government in Beijing. Hong Kong continues using English common law while Macau continues using the Portuguese civil law system. It was formulated in the early 1980s by Deng Xiaoping, the Paramount Leader of China (PRC), during negotiations with the United Kingdom over Hong Kong

General Overview

Hong Kong

Hong Kong, special administrative region of China, located to the east of the Pearl River, estuary on the south coast of China. The region is bordered by Guangdong province to the north and the South China Sea to the east, south, and west. It consists of Hong Kong Island, originally ceded by China to Great Britain in 1842, the southern part of the Kowloon Peninsula and Stonecutters Island ceded in 1860, and the New Territories, which include the mainland area lying largely to the north, together with 230 large and small offshore island, all of which were leased from China for 99 years from 1898 to 1997. The Chinese-British joint declaration signed on December 19, 1984, paved the way for the entire territory to be returned to China, which occurred July 1, 1997.

The overwhelming majority of the population is Chinese by place of origin, the non-Chinese making up only a tiny fraction of the total. Non-Chinese groups consist largely of Filipinos, Indonesians, South Asians with Americans, Canadians, and Australians. An overwhelming majority of the Chinese are from Guangdong province and from Hong Kong itself, with smaller numbers coming from other parts of China.

Chinese and English are both official languages. Chinese, especially Cantonese in the spoken form, is the common language, however, and is almost universally understood. A variety of dialects and other languages are used among the ethnic minorities. Apart from Cantonese, common dialects such as Teochew, Hakka, and Tanka are used within separate communities of the Guangdong and Hong Kong Chinese. Groups from other parts of China are also likely to use their own native dialects, and, similarly, the non-Chinese are likely to use their own native languages among themselves. The use of Mandarin Chinese has risen as Hong Kong has reintegrated with China.

Historical Background

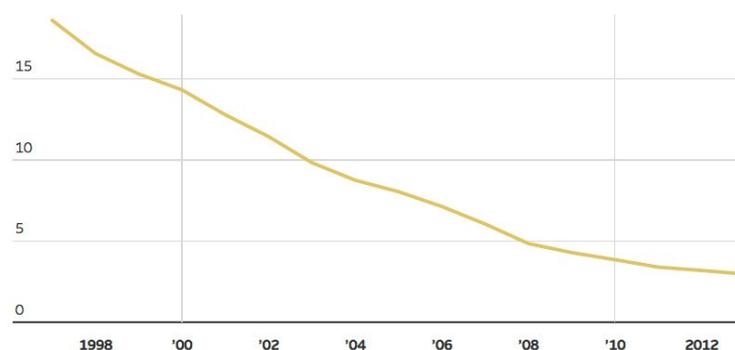
The United Kingdom held Hong Kong under its colony since 1841 when they occupied the area during the First Opium War. The war broke out when Qing Dynasty China attempted to crack down an illegal opium trade which caused an addiction in China. In 1842, Hong Kong was given to British under the Treaty of Nanjing. In 1898 Convention for the Extension of of Hong Kong Territory, leased the territories to Britain for 99 years. However, China would regain control of its leased lands on July 1 1997 with a ceremony attended by British Prime Minister Tony Blair, Prince Charles, Chinese President Jiang Zemin and United States Secretary of State Madeleine Albright. After the handover Hong Kong became an Special Administrative Region of China with its own constitution, legal rights and democratic laws. Up to 100.000 Chinese seeked refuge in Hong Kong after the Communist Party took power in 1949 which led Hong Kong experience a economic growth eventually making it a home to a multicultural international community.

Hong Kong's Importance

Hong Kong's economy is a highly developed free market economy with low taxation, almost free port trade and well established financial international market. According to the Index of Economic Freedom, Hong Kong has had the highest degree of economic freedom in the world. According to World Trade Organization, Hong Kong is the world's 8th largest exporter of merchandise trade

and the world's 15th largest exporter of commercial services in 2018. According to a triennial survey conducted by the Bank for International Settlements, Hong Kong is the 2nd largest foreign exchange market in Asia and the 4th largest in the world in 2019. Hong Kong is an important banking and financial centre in the Asia Pacific. Hong Kong is the 3rd leading global financial centre, only after New York and London, according to the Global Financial Centre Index. The Hong Kong International Airport is the world's busiest airport for international air cargo since 2010. Hong Kong is also one of the world's busiest container ports. However, with the enormous growth in Chinese economy, Hong Kong becomes less important day by day in basis of Chinese national economy. Hong Kong used to cover %18 of Chinese GDP, now it's %3. The Chinese government's confidence has grown along with its economy that could bring an end Hong Kong protesters' demands for greater democracy. However, with the latest updates with Coronavirus (n-Cov) outbreak in Wuhan, and recession in Chinese economy, we can not be sure that future brings.

Hong Kong GDP as a percentage of Mainland China's GDP



Source: World Bank



Hong Kong Protests

In March 2019 the government of Hong Kong proposed a bill that would have allowed extraditions to mainland China. In response, the people of Hong Kong took to the streets in record-breaking numbers. On one day, 16 June, up to 2 million people marched peacefully in the streets of Hong Kong. The Hong Kong police have responded to the protests with batons, tear gas, pepper spray, rubber bullets and water cannons. Although the Extradition Bill has now been dropped, the movement has evolved into a much wider call for change and protests in Hong Kong continue. The withdrawal of the Extradition Bill was only one of the “five demands” that have propelled the movement. Protesters also want the government to retract its characterization of protests as “riots”; an independent investigation into use of force by police; and the unconditional release of everyone arrested in the context of protests. They also want political reform to ensure genuine universal suffrage – the ability to choose Hong Kong’s leaders themselves – as set under the city’s mini-Constitution, the Basic Law. Tens of thousands of protesters took to the streets of Hong Kong on Wednesday, 12 June. From late afternoon into the night on 12 June, the largely peaceful protesters faced an onslaught of tear gas, guns firing rubber bullets, pepper spray and baton charges from police to disperse the demonstration near government headquarters. These unlawful police actions posed a serious

risk of severe injury, or even death, to protesters. More than 1,300 people have been arrested so far in the context of the Extradition Bill protests, and the number continues to rise. People were beaten with batons and fists during their arrests, even when they posed no resistance. Anti-riot police and a Special Tactical Squad (STS), commonly known as “raptors”, have been responsible for the worst violence. The vast majority of Hong Kong protesters remain peaceful. However, there has been violence, which appears to be escalating alongside excessive use of force by the police. Police have also failed to act when protesters and journalists have been attacked by others. While police have a duty to maintain public order, they violated major international human rights laws.

Major Parties Involved

United Kingdom: United Kingdom gained control of Hong Kong after the First Opium War. United Kingdom handed Hong Kong to People’s Republic of China in 1997 for 50 years. United Kingdom did not involve the movement for separation in Hong Kong despite their role in the issue.

People’s Republic of China: People’s republic of China has the control of Hong Kong with their “One Country Two Systems” policy. Nowadays, the policy is not welcomed by Hong Kong Side. People in Hong Kong want freedom from China which started a movement. China uses excessive force in response to suppress violating major human rights.

Hong Kong Special Autonomous Region (SAR): As mentioned Hong Kong is dependent in exterior yet free in interior policy. With an foreign interest, Hong Kong has a great economy. Even though they have a great economy, Hong Kong lost its importance to China causing a separation movement.

Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

Unfortunately, there are no previous attempts to resolve the issue from international organizations such as the United Nations or United Nations Security Council. The issue is seen as interior problem of a world giant which other Permanent 5 countries rather not to interfere. Amnesty International published a report on the issue regarding the human rights violations however, it was not very effective.

Chronological Order of Events

1842	China cedes Hong Kong island to Britain after the First Opium War.
1898	China leases the New Territories together with 235 islands to Britain for 99 years from 1 July.

1937	With the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War, Hong Kong becomes a refuge for thousands of mainland Chinese
1941	Japan occupies Hong Kong in World War 2
1946	Britain re-establishes civil government.
1950s	Hong Kong enjoys economic revival based on light industries such as textiles.
1967	Severe riots break out, mainly instigated by followers of China's Cultural Revolution.
1982	Britain and China begin talks on the future of Hong Kong.
1984	Britain and China sign Joint Declaration on the conditions under which Hong Kong will revert to Chinese rule in 1997.
1989	The massacre of pro-democracy demonstrators in Beijing's Tiananmen Square leads to calls for the introduction of further democratic safeguards in Hong Kong.
1990	Beijing formally ratifies Hong Kong's post-handover mini-constitution or Basic Law.
1992 April	April - Chris Patten becomes last British governor of Hong Kong.
1992 October	Chris Patten announces proposals for the democratic reform of Hong Kong's institutions aimed at broadening the voting base in elections.
1992 December	Hong Kong stock market crashes.
1995	Elections held for new Legislative Council (LegCo).
1997 July	Hong Kong is handed back to the Chinese authorities after more than 150 years of British control.

1998 May	First post-handover elections held.
2003	Both China and Hong Kong are hit by the pneumonia-like Sars virus.
2005 March	Despite the criticism of his rule, Tung Chee-hwa resigns, citing failing health. He is succeeded in June by Donald
2006 July	Thousands of people rally in support of full democracy.
2008 September	Hong Kong's pro-democracy camp wins more than a third of seats in legislative elections, retaining a key veto over future bills.
2014 July	Thousands of protesters take part in what organisers say could be Hong Kong's largest pro-democracy rally in a decade.
2014 August	Chinese government rules out a fully democratic election for Hong Kong leader in 2017, saying that only candidates approved by Beijing will be allowed to run.
2014 September-November	Pro-democracy demonstrators occupy the city centre for weeks in protest at the Chinese government's decision to limit voters' choices in the 2017 Hong Kong leadership election. More than 100,000 people took to the streets at the height of the Occupy Central protests.
2014 December	Authorities take down Mong Kok protest camp, leaving a few hundred protesters at two camps at Admiralty and Causeway Bay.
2014 December	Hong Kong former government official Thomas Kwok is sentenced to five years in jail in the city's biggest-ever corruption case.
2015 June	Legislative Council rejects proposals for electing the territory's next leader in 2017.

2016 August	Hundreds of protesters rally against the disqualification of six pro-independence candidates from Legislative Council elections on 4 September.
2016 September	A new generation of pro-independence activists win seats in Legislative Council elections in the highest turnout since the 1997 handover from Britain to China.
2016 November	Thousands of people gather in central Hong Kong to show their support for China's intervention in the territory's political affairs after Beijing moves to have two pro-independence legislators removed from office.
2016 November	The high court disqualifies pro-independence legislators Sixtus Leung and Yau Wai-Ching from taking their seats in the Legislative Council after they refused to pledge allegiance to China during a swearing in ceremony.
2017 February	Former chief executive Donald Tsang is sentenced to 20 months in prison for misconduct in public office.
2017 June	Chinese President Xi Jinping visits Hong Kong to swear in Chief Executive Carrie Lam, and uses his visit to warn against any attempt to undermine China's influence over the special administrative region.
2017 January	Demonstrations against moves to base officials from mainland China in the territory.
2019 June-July	Hong Kong sees anti-government and pro-democracy protests, involving violent clashes with police, against a proposal to allow extradition to mainland China.

Possible Solutions

Most logical solution upon this issue is to prevent the riot in Hong Kong. To prevent it, bilateral agreement must be performed covering both sides' interest, however, that would be

hard as People's Republic of China does not want an independent Hong Kong despite their "One Country Two Systems" policy. Hong Kong wants an independence with a legitimate voting thus an unbiased referendum might be performed under United Nations. China should stop using excessive force upon protestors thus a ultimatum from United Nations Security Council might be effective. However, in this case this should be an utopian idea since People's Republic of China is one of the P5 members also a world superpower. Finally China's power to veto should be considered while making a decision.

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