

Why Hong Kong's New National Security Law Matters to the West*?

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Widely recognized for its democratic principles and ways of life – left by the British legacy and safeguarded by the “One Country, Two Systems” formula – Hong Kong has indeed become the city that had gone through many stages of protests since the hand-over from British to the Chinese government in 1997. Talking of which, one of the most violent protests in the history of Hong Kong, namely the protest against the extradition bill¹ and its subsequent issues such as the abusing of police authority, was cooled down and put under control owing to the coronavirus outbreak. Just when the people think the pandemic is giving the protesters a long break, the city is now hit by the newest wave of demonstration against the newly proposed security law in Hong Kong, which is argued to have the power to nip the freedoms and rights that Hong Kongers are currently enjoying in the bud. It has been a year since the attempt by the Chinese government to the intervene in the affairs of this autonomous Special Administrative Region (SAR) using the extradition bill took place. However, the death of the extradition law does not mean an end of China's venture to exert influence in Hong Kong's current system. In the midst of worrying COVID-19 pandemic that attacks countries across the world, China's national legislature has initiated

the new security law specifically designed for Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, in which the security new law has already received a green light by the Parliament on May 28, 2020². This new attempt by China has indeed awakened the protesters, especially the pro-democracy activists in Hong Kong, and has also stunned many world leaders, specifically in the U.S. and in the Western allies, taking them by huge surprise as they are very much busy handling the coronavirus problems in their respective countries. Despite warnings from the United States and a large-scale demonstration by thousands of people on the streets, the National People's Congress still approved the new security law and spurred tremendous reactions and controversies across Hong Kong and the western world. Although the Chinese government's endless pursuit of control of this semi-autonomous city is a given, the timing of the newly proposed security law is questionable and shall be taken into thorough examination. The reaction as we have witnessed from the U.S. and its allies from the West on this specific matter, however, also demands concrete discussion and analysis, particularly from not only political perspective, but also from geopolitical, diplomatic and economic angles. Nonetheless, it is also worth noting that this is not the first time that

¹ Read more about the Extradition Bill at: Purbrick, M. (2019, October 14). A Report of the 2019 Hong Kong Protests, *Asian Affairs*, 50:4, 465-487, DOI: 10.1080/03068374.2019.1672397

² Marlow, I. (2020, May 28). China Approves Hong Kong Security Legislation, Defying Trump. *Bloomberg*. Retrieved from <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-05-28/china-approves-hong-kong-security-legislation-defying-trump>

*The West here refers to the Western hemisphere in global politics that is dominated by the United States and its western allies, especially the United Kingdom.

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the United States as well as its Western allies express their opinions negatively regarding the relationship between China and Hong Kong. Most significantly, their intervention does not end with just a statement or condemnation; most of the time, it comes with punishable measures. The most recent of such measure is Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act 2019³ enacted by the U.S. Congress, which came after the protracted protests on the extradition bill. Why does the new Hong Kong's National Security Law matters to the US and western allies this much? With the odd of allegation by Beijing government as a reaction that meddles the internal affairs of China and Hong Kong, what are the odds and interests at stake for the United States and the West? Before going into details about that side of the story, it is indeed necessary to understand the substance of this new law, how it works, the legality, and how it would change the way Hong Kong's system operates.

❖ Why New National Security Law and What Does It Mean for Hong Kong?

Even though the entire content of the new security law of Hong Kong is not revealed and the details have not been put together, what is known to the public at the moment about this law is that the new law would criminalize all acts that are defined as secession, subversion, terrorism and interference into Hong Kong by foreign forces⁴. In addition, the new law would give a legal authority to the Chinese government to set up its own legal institutions and law enforcement agency alongside the existing bodies responsible for such issues, and allow mainland agencies to operate in the city when

necessary, which undermines the power of the independent judiciary in Hong Kong. This is the most contentious part of the law that generated street protests and triggered controversies in Hong Kong as well as the international condemnation.

It is indeed important to understand the relationship between Hong Kong and China and to what extent can China intervene in Hong Kong. Guided by the Sino-British Joint Declaration⁵ signed in 1984 by the then Chinese Premier Zhao Ziyang and British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, which exhibited the hand-over of Hong Kong territory back to China in 1997, Hong Kong is given an autonomous status from China for 50 years under the "One Country, Two Systems" principle, and has been enjoying a very high degree of freedom and rights since then, comparing to other cities and regions in China. Except for foreign affairs and defense capability, Hong Kong is fully equipped with its own system, including a mini constitution, known as the 'Basic Law'⁶, and an executive, legislative and independent judicial powers are off the hand of the China's central government. Furthermore, Hong Kong also continues its political tradition of having an electoral system that follows a democratic universal suffrage and its economic tradition as a capitalist system that fully contradicts to the socialist system of Mainland China. On top of that, Hong Kong appears in a special trading status with the United States and the United Kingdom that was its former colonial power. Until today, Hong Kong is one of the only two territories⁷ in China that is able to commemorate the controversial Tiananmen Square crackdown in 1989 (Cheung & Hughes, 2020).

³ See more at: Congress.gov. (2019, November 27). *S. 1838 - Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act of 2019*. Retrieved from <https://www.congress.gov/116/plaws/publ76/PLAW-116publ76.pdf>

⁴ The report was by made BBC's Hong Kong Reporter Grace Tsoi a day after the new security law for Hong Kong was approved by the Chinese Parliament. Read more at Grace Tsoi. (2020, May 29). *Hong Kong security law: What is it and is it worrying?*, BBC. Retrieved from <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-52765838>

⁵ See the full content of Sino-British Joint Declaration at: *Treaty Series: Treaties and international agreements registered or filed and recorded with the Secretariat of the United Nations*, New York, 1994, *United Nations Treaty Series*, vol. 1399, No. 23389-23396, p61-73, available from <https://treaties.un.org/doc/Publication/UNTS/Volume%201399/v1399.pdf>

⁶ See the full content of the Basic Law of Hong Kong at: *The Constitution of the People's Republic of China – The Basic Law of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China*. (May 2020). Retrieved from the Basic Law: https://www.basiclaw.gov.hk/en/basiclawtext/images/basiclaw_full_text_en.pdf

⁷ Another territory in China that can commemorate the Tiananmen Square massacre is Macau.

The problem is that China is trying to make changes to the “One Country, Two Systems” principle – which has been with Hong Kong for 23 years and which is supposed to carry on for the next 27 years – before the time is up by using the new security law for Hong Kong. Such provocation, without doubt, raises questionable practicality and reignites political discontent. According to the Sino-British Joint Declaration, Hong Kong was supposed to set up its own national security law since the hand-over in 1997 but the first attempt by the Hong Kong’s first Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa in 2003 failed miserably as half a million of protesters took to the streets to express their dissatisfaction at the proposed law (Kuo, Yu & Davidson, 2020). Since then, the proposal for national security law was never put on the table by the following Chief Executives and was forgotten by many. No one expects that the new proposal of the law would emerge 17 years later, but only that this time it was initiated and put into action by the central government, the act of which stunned many with extreme shock, including the Hong Kongers themselves and the Western countries. Beijing’s action is argued to violate the constitution of Hong Kong – specifically the Article 18⁸ and Article 23⁹ of the Basic Law – and the Joint Declaration – in a broader sense – since the authority to impose or implement any legislation in Hong Kong within the 50-year autonomy period should fall under the hand of Hong Kong government, especially when it outright concerns with the national security of this city. This is the fundamental part that legal scholars and Hong Kong Bar Association agree upon.

Nevertheless, the problem is not only with the legality of the law. What the Hong Kongers and the foreign countries are worrying about this newly proposed security law is that the rights and freedom that the people in Hong Kong are having would be stripped of or limited to a certain extent, while the

worse scenario could mean the beginning of an end to the principle of “One Country, Two Systems”. Known for their coordinated phases of demonstration on the streets to express their dissatisfaction with the government, Hong Kong protesters will have to face the worst nightmare for the first time in 23 years when their protests could be justified for criminal acts under the jurisdiction of the new national security law. The subversion and terrorism parts of the law will justify the central government’s ultimate power to lawfully crack down the protesters and punish them with criminal acts. Besides, the offenders will be punished using Mainland China’s criminal law that includes death penalty. Furthermore, what it also means is that the judicial process under the new security laws will bypass the legitimate legislature in Hong Kong, or that the independent judiciary body of Hong Kong will be influenced greatly by the central government. Although Beijing government has reassured that the new security law for Hong Kong is only to further strengthen the “One Country, Two Systems” formula and that Hong Kong government will still be the one that has power to enact and put the law into implementation, the role and autonomy of Hong Kong’s government is very much doubted and subjected to be controversial.

In addition to the concerns regarding the substance of the law, many people question the timing of the proposed draft law and the urgency to vote on it. According to the Chinese government, they cannot wait any longer for Hong Kong to enact the law on its own when 23 years have passed since the hand-over and they see no sign of the law being enacted or proposed by Hong Kong at all. Why this time in the middle of a global crisis? Whilst the eyes across the world are on the coronavirus pandemic – especially with the U.S. and western countries brought to the knees by COVID-19 – China who was relieved of the battle against the pandemic

⁸ Article 18 of the Basic Law indicates that Mainland Chinese laws cannot be applied in Hong Kong.

⁹ Article 23 of the Basic Law mandates Hong Kong to enact its own national security law to prevent treason, secession, sedition and subversion against China’s central government.

took this as one-of-a-lifetime opportunity to expedite its way into controlling Hong Kong. Moreover, the central government in Beijing seems to use the pandemic as a strategic wall that would block the protesters from gathering in crowded spaces to stage their demonstrations. It is indeed a strategic thinking that should be applauded for. When is a better time to evade global attention than now?

COVID-19, nevertheless, cannot make China's move on the new national security law for Hong Kong unnoticed or disregarded. Instead, pro-democracy activists in Hong Kong are awakened and started to come out of their houses, a protest crowd seen for the first time since the pandemic hit the city, defying social-distancing order. Also, China's call for a rush proposal of the national security law for Hong Kong in the midst of the pandemic has triggered an immediate reaction from the United States, Canada, Australia and the United Kingdom, one of the signatories to the Joint Declaration, those of which have issued a joint statement¹⁰ condemning China for its violation of the UN-registered declaration immediately after news of the new legislation approval circulated. On an individual level, Washington administration has also threatened to revoke Hong Kong from its special trading and financial status with the United States justified by the erosion of Hong Kong's autonomy, a position of which has formed the framework for such a special trading status. Contradict to what the U.S. had anticipated that a pro-democratic and free Hong Kong would set an example for China, it is China that is "modeling Hong Kong after itself", said the U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo (Deutsche Welle [DW], 2020). As for the UK, the government has made a fresh change to the immigration rules of Hong Kong citizens who hold BNO –British National Overseas– passport to stay in the UK for 12 months (the current policy allows 6-month visit)

if China continues to walk down this path and implement the law defying the Declaration and Hong Kong's Basic Law¹¹. The BNO passport holders from Hong Kong would also be given the legal right to work in the United Kingdom, a move which "could place them on a route to citizenship", according to the statement by British Prime Minister Boris Johnson¹². This new immigration policy is introduced by British Prime Minister himself as a part of the UK's responsibility on Hong Kong if the Beijing-made new national security law for Hong Kong enters into force. Besides, the British Foreign Secretary, Dominic Raab, has declared that the UK government held discussion with the member states of the Five Eyes, an intelligence Alliance, which comprises of Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States, to coordinate a possible mass evacuation¹³ of Hong Kongers. At the United Nations level, senior ministers from Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand have called the United Nations to appoint a special envoy to monitor how the new security law could affect the rights of the people. These few examples demonstrate an intensive care that the United States and the its western allies, especially the UK, has given to Hong Kong.

❖ Why Hong Kong's New Security Law Matters to the U.S. and Western Allies?

The importance of Hong Kong and the new national security law for this Special Administrative Region to Chinese National Interest is very obvious and understandable. But why this new security law made in Beijing for Hong Kong, as a special administrative region of the People's Republic of China, seems to matter so much to the West is something skeptical and doubted. What stands at the stake of completely losing Hong Kong to China certainly indicates the reasons why the U.S. and its western allies are so eager to stop

¹⁰ See more at GOV.UK. (2020, May 28). *China's proposed new security law for Hong Kong: joint statement*. Retrieved from <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/joint-statement-from-the-uk-australia-canada-and-united-states-on-hong-kong>

¹¹ ¹² ¹³ See more at the report by BBC. (2020, June 03). *UK to change immigration rules for Hong Kong citizens if China passes law*. Retrieved from <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-52900700>

the bill from coming to existence. Therefore, only when we understand the importance of Hong Kong to the U.S. and the allies can we explain why the new security law also matters to them. There are at least three major compelling factors of interests that prove the significance of Hong Kong to the West.

- **Geo-Political Interests**

First, Hong Kong as China's Special Administrative Region constitutes a significant geopolitical interest to the United States and Western allies, especially in the contemporary international politics with the rapid of China into global eminence. In 2019, for instance, Trump administration has passed several bills on Hong Kong concerning human rights, one of which is the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act of 2019, which could trigger diplomatic response and economic measure by the U.S. on Hong Kong after the attempt by the Chinese government to go forward with the extradition bill and the series of event featuring the use of police authority to crackdown the anti-extradition bill protests. Moreover, the Further Consolidated Appropriations Act 2020 demands that the State Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor shall reserve a minimum of no less than USD1.5 million for democracy programs in Hong Kong (Kai, 2020). This U.S. pattern of interest in Hong Kong clearly justifies that the U.S. commitment to protecting Hong Kong at all costs from the Chinese central government's control. A point worth considering about the U.S.'s choice with Hong Kong is because the fact that, as mentioned earlier, Hong Kong is granted a very high level of autonomy from Mainland China, although the city remains as a part of the Mainland. Despite being given the same status as a Special Administrative Region and formerly a colony of a European country, Macau is treated very differently from Hong Kong. By pointing that out does not mean the lives in Macau are not as free as those in Hong Kong, but it illustrates the difference of strategic interests that the City of Hong Kong can offer to the West. Also, it is obvious that Macau is

way much closer to the Mainland and less resistant to the Chinese government than the activists in Hong Kong, who appears to be in a closer line to what the U.S. is rallying for, the democracy and democratic practices. Unlike Macau who not only honors the "two systems" principle but also embraces the "one country" status, a survey by the University of Hong Kong reveals that most people in Hong Kong identify themselves as 'Hong Kongers' instead of 'Chinese' (Cheung & Hughes, 2020). Meanwhile, the life in Macau is pretty much the same as in those in the Mainland. Mandarin, for instance, is widely spoken while Chinese national anthem is proudly sung. Besides, the Chinese government's order is strictly followed by the most of the people in Macau. The narrative of the Chinese nationalism remains deeper for them than those who resides in Hong Kong. Although Hong Kongers blames the colonial mentality for their difficulty to merge with China, Macau was under the colonial rule for more than 400 years while Hong Kong was only about 150 years. The difference between Hong Kong and Macau also explain the reasons why Macau is not the option for the U.S. to promote democracy and change China. Regardless of the reasons behind Hong Kong's rebellious nature against the Chinese government, Hong Kong, geopolitically, portrays as the perfect available weak-spot for the U.S. to meddle in the internal affairs of China and balance the rise of China in power politics competition. The unchallenged and continuous efforts by the United States to support pro-democratic movements and activists in Hong Kong draw out the strategic importance of the new national security law, which severely prohibits and criminalizes the intervention by foreign forces with the interpretation of such acts as a threat to national security of China as a whole that exclusively includes the Special Administrative Region of Hong Kong. However, the U.S. interest in Hong Kong is not recent, but it has been there since the Cold War. Although it is small, but Hong Kong's geography is too important to ignore. During the Cold War, Hong Kong was situated at a strategic mid-spot between

the communist governments and the governments of western allies in Asia. A confidential report¹⁴ by the United States National Security Council on the U.S. Policy on Hong Kong in 1960 revealed that Hong Kong was regarded as the “Free World outpost”, allowing the U.S. government to establish “the largest overseas intelligence apparatus” housed by the U.S. consulate in Hong Kong and conducting anti-communist propaganda (Fong, 2019).

After the Cold War ended, Hong Kong is still a valuable asset and a strategic location to the U.S., and most importantly, it still serves as a “Free World outpost”, except that this time it is between China and the United States. As previously argued earlier, the belief that Hong Kong could become a “change agent” and a promoter of a democratic values in a socialist state still dwells in the mindset of today American decision makers. It is the key to destabilize the socialist rule in China and replace it with liberal and democratic core values. In an essence, Hong Kong is the American “Trojan Horse”¹⁵ in the People’s Republic of China.

Given Hong Kong’s geo-political importance, the U.S. has formalized the relations with this city since 1992 under the U.S.-Hong Kong Policy Act¹⁶, which justifies special treatments from Washington for Hong Kong in terms of trade, investment and immigration, etc. as long as Hong Kong remains highly autonomous from the communist China. This is the core part that the Trump Administration is using to threaten China when the proposal for a new national security law for Hong Kong reached the National People’s Congress in late May. This Policy Act has been acting as a tool to monitor and keep Hong Kong’s autonomy from China in-check for the last two decades since the hand-over.

▪ Strategic Alliance Interests

Second, Hong Kong is an important case that portrays strategic alliance interests of the West in Asia. To the United Kingdom, who is the main signatory to the declaration signed in 1984 and came into force in 1985 which mandates the high autonomy to the city of Hong Kong until 2047, the move by Beijing on the national security law for this former British colony underscores the UK position as one of the major powers in the global arena, especially when the UK just exited its membership from the European institutionalized regional alliance – European Union – and the discussion about the future relationship between the UK and the EU is uncertain and incomplete. In addition, the British economy and international image has suffered by the coronavirus outbreak, as the UK ranks second after the United States for the most death cases – with over 40,000 deaths from only about 290,000 infection cases¹⁷– from COVID-19, which leaves too many unresolved issues in the hand of the British Prime Minister at this very moment who just took the UK out of the EU with a hope for political, security and economic gain. The newly adopted security law has just created another issue for the UK to handle. Failure to respond to such a threat against the 50-year-guarantee of the principle of democracy and the autonomy of Hong Kong – as stipulated in the 1984 Sino-British Joint Declaration – will undervalue the strategic image of UK as a former empire and great power in international politics, specifically to its allies and former colonies in Asia. As long as the Joint Declaration is still valid, the UK – more or less – has to step in and intervene as the UK still has a historic moral and legal responsibilities for Hong Kong as its former colonial power and as the one who handed Hong Kong to China in 1997. According to British Foreign Office, Britain would have the “right to raise any breaches

¹⁴ See the full content of the 1960 National Security Council Report on the U.S. Policy on Hong Kong at: Office of the Historian. (1960, June 11). 335. *National Security Council Report*. Retrieved from <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v19/d335>

¹⁵ The term is used by Benny Tai Yiu-ting, a co-founder of Occupy, in Apple Daily newspaper.

¹⁶ See more at: Office of the Law Revision Counsel. (n.d.). *CHAPTER 66—UNITED STATES-HONG KONG POLICY*. Retrieved from <https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?path=/prelim@title22/chapter66&edition=prelim>

¹⁷ The data is as of 12 June 2020, from Worldometer Coronavirus Cases.

with China after 1997” while adding that it “would not hesitate to do so” (Serhan, 2019). While Britain reserves the right to report the breach of the declaration, it has not done so for the time being. Instead, Boris Johnson administration took a reactive rather than an aggressive approach by introducing a new immigration policy, what Boris labeled as “one of the biggest changes to the British visa system”, for almost three million Hong Kongers who is eligible for a British National Overseas passport so that they are entitled to stay in the UK for 12 months without a visa, an increase of the current policy of 6 months, and a legal right to work in the UK, a status that puts them in a favorable condition for a British citizenship¹⁸. Boris Johnson believes that it is under the British responsibility to ensure the safety and well-beings of Hong Kong people. While this new security law for Hong Kong will test the UK’s power in the international politics arena, China’s broken promise of this UN-registered declaration will be another beginning of China’s rise as a rule breaker and its emergence as a new global player that disrespects an international agreement in favor for its national interest. On another perspective, this new security bill will serve as a test of China’s power in a new decade of the 21st century, on the one hand, and Britain’s influence in foreign affairs after it deliberately left the EU, on the other hand. If Britain fails to come up with a feasible measure and powerful response, it will greatly hurt its public image as the former powerful colonizer, which is likely to further deescalate the trusts from its allies.

As far as the U.S. is concerned, a failure to save Hong Kong during this decisive time will weaken its role as core democracy promoter and affect its grand strategy to liberalize the socialist China. Imaging a group of people ganging up against one person just to be pushed over by that one person, how embarrassing would it feel like. Furthermore, the United States also has a strategic alliance

interest in the issue of Hong Kong. The response from the U.S. and its western allies will serve as a guarantee for other traditional allies of the West in the region – especially Japan, Taiwan, South Korea, and even the Philippines and other allies in the South China Sea dispute. Although in recent years, the bilateral relationship between the U.S. and the Philippines has been strained, and President Duterte also announced the intention to end the security pact with the United States as its traditional security ally, China’s aggressive actions in the South China Sea in recent months during the COVID-19 pandemic would implicate the importance of the U.S. as a security ally, or at least still strategically as a security balancer to the rising China, in the region. Using Hong Kong as an example, the U.S. will be able to still position itself as a sole security provider in the Asia-Pacific and East Asian region, most importantly for the countries that have been militarily threatened by and inferior to China. In other words, when its allies in the region are threatened by a potential global power challenger such as China, it is not in national interest of the United States to ignore the problem. Given the fact that the U.S. influence in Asia is also showing a pattern of decline, Beijing-made Hong Kong’s new security law is indeed the best time for the U.S. to strengthen its role in the Region as well as to regain and enhance its trust to its traditional security allies in the region, specifically when its allies such as the Philippines, for instance, seems to shift its position to accommodate the rising China.

▪ Economic Interests

Last but not least, Hong Kong is an undeniable city of economic interest for the West. Hong Kong’s status as a financial hub and trading center has made it much more significant to the Western countries, especially the United States. The U.S. alone has more than 1,300 companies operating in the city of Hong Kong (Bartholomeusz, 2020) with approximately USD82.5 billion foreign direct

¹⁸ According to the report by Wintour, P. & Davidson, H. (2020, June 03). Boris Johnson lays out visa offer to nearly 3m Hong Kong citizens. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jun/03/britain-could-change-immigration-rules-for-hong-kong-citizens>.

investment in 2018¹⁹. Hong Kong is indeed an important market for the American goods, in which the United States has enjoyed a favorable trade surplus of USD31.1 billion in merchandise trade with Hong Kong in 2018, the only single economy that the U.S. has a trade surplus with (Trade and Industry Department, 2019). Additionally, Hong Kong is the main gate that acts as an entrepôt for U.S.-China trade that has witnessed about USD37 billion of Mainland China's exports to the U.S. and USD10 billion of Mainland China's imports from the U.S. travelling through the port of Hong Kong. But it is not only for U.S.-China trade activities. Hong Kong is home to one of the busiest international containers' ports in the world and an ocean transshipment hub for Asian cargo. The city is a doorway for the West's foreign capital and trade, in which more than USD1 trillion worth of trade flows through Hong Kong annually (Bartholomeusz, 2020).

Another renown characteristic of Hong Kong is a financial hub. Owing to relatively low taxes, independent judiciary and a distinctive set of rules of law from China, Hong Kong has grown as a haven for financial market, although many people are worrying about this status after Trump's unilateral statement to withdraw special privileges for Hong Kong that was granted and promised under the United States–Hong Kong Policy Act 1992. For the West, thus, it is clearly in their economic interest to protect Hong Kong at this moment since it preserves the status quo of their safeguarded business environment under the British-style common law as well as its capitalist economic system or otherwise would be threatened by the newly proposed national security law for Hong Kong. Another proof is that most of Western firms in Hong Kong currently operate with the U.S. dollar as currency, including 97 percent of foreign-exchange deal, 58 percent of cross-border loans and other bank instruments, 43 percent of cross-border derivatives and 37 percent of deposits (The

Economist, 2020). Moreover, three of the largest five banks among the 163 registered banks in Hong Kong are controlled and managed by Western countries while half of their money is sourced from America, Europe and non-Chinese Asia. Thus, the new security law could threaten Hong Kong's safe harbour for further financial activities after the city is viewed to be no longer autonomous from the Chinese government.

Until now, we have not seen any further tough responses from the concerning parties such as the United States, the United Kingdom and other Western allies regarding the new security bill for Hong Kong thus far. There have only been warnings, threats and a number of passive responses toward the new law while other countries, including Japan, only chose to bypass a joint statement with the United States.

The overlapping strategic interest of both China and the West on Hong Kong, however, makes it impossible to end with a happy ending for both sides. A new round of rift between China and the West – with the influence over Hong Kong as the prize – will only do more damages to Hong Kong itself than to China or to the West. Whatever the result of this new struggle will be, whether China successfully goes forward and implement the security law or the West can rally enough support to cancel the bill, the world should expect various levels of tension in the international politics as a consequence. While people in Hong Kong are seriously worrying about their lives after the bill is implemented, the exchange between China and the West will just only end up as another struggle to preserve their own images and to set up the stage for their own strategic interests, rather than the actual interest for the people of Hong Kong.

¹⁹ The data is based on the Trade Fact by the Office of the United States Trade Representative, (n.d.). *Hong Kong – U.S.-Hong Kong Trade Facts*. Retrieved from <https://ustr.gov/countries-regions/china-mongolia-taiwan/hong-kong>

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