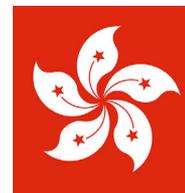


INTERNATIONAL ACTION CENTER STATEMENT: U.S. ROLE IN HONG KONG PROTESTS



U.S. imperialism is the greatest enemy of the world's peoples struggling for a future with dignity, sovereignty and full human rights. Wall Street and finance capital maintains its dominance through the threat of over 800 foreign military bases, aircraft carriers, constant coups, targeted assassinations, drone attacks and starvation sanctions imposed on over 30 countries around the world.

Wall Street also uses the soft power National Endowment for Democracy (NED) to fund many thousands of NGOs, reactionary political parties, and alliances with corrupt dictators all over the world.

U.S. aid or interventions have never protected human rights or democracy.

Recent mass protests against a proposed modification of extradition laws have rattled Hong Kong. It is the natural response of all progressive forces to rally to the side of mass demonstrations. **But it is the duty of revolutionaries to look deeper, to ask what forces are behind a movement, and who stands to benefit.**

Background

Britain stole Hong Kong from China at the conclusion of the 1st Opium War in 1842. Through the Opium Wars, Britain and the U.S. military imposed the opium trade, unequal treaties and occupation. One hundred years of imperialist looting completely impoverished and underdeveloped China.

The victory of the Chinese Revolution in 1949 radically changed China and began the efforts to build socialism. But for 30 years, from 1949 to 1979 China was completely walled off, blockaded and sanctioned by the U.S. and western imperialist countries.

In 1979 under the 'reform and opening up' initiated under Deng Xiaoping China made the concession of capitalist market reforms. This finally gave China access to some technology and capital from the industrialized world but was a deal with the devil, strengthening the capitalist class in China.

The British colony of Hong Kong was returned to China in 1997 under the 'one country, two systems' principle that preserved much of the British colonial legal/judicial system in the former colony.

Hong Kong is a center of world finance capital. It is deeply hostile to the social measures that have lifted hundreds of millions of people in mainland China out of extreme poverty and provided high standards of health care, education and modern infrastructure.

Finance capital has made strong inroads into China. Hong Kong is the West's base of operations, encouraging the growth of a capitalist class in China that threatens the foundations of socialism.

Today China is a deeply contradictory society, characterized by the struggle between a re-born capitalist class and the aspirations of Chinese workers and peasants to maintain and expand a planned economy.

It is in the context of this struggle, as well as the escalating U.S. military encirclement and trade war against China that the current protests in Hong Kong must be understood. The forces of finance capital in Hong Kong and their allies in the U.S. and Europe want to pull Hong Kong away from China so it can function as an economic and political outpost in the region. This means limiting legal and political integration with China as much as possible. To this end the U.S. has provided extensive political, financial and media support to the protests.

The vocabulary of protest is available to both the left and right. Through the NED the U.S. has financed coup attempts, often involving a component of mass protest in Honduras, Nicaragua, Venezuela, Haiti, Ukraine and Syria. Any movement has the potential to sweep into it many well-meaning progressive people, often with legitimate grievances whose interests are not those of the movement's leadership.

Facts about the Hong Kong protests

Multiple member organizations of the Civil Human Rights Front, the coalition behind the recent protests receive or have received funding from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) a U.S. funded soft-power organization that doles out money in the interests of U.S. imperialism. These include the: Hong Kong Institute of Human Resource Management, Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions, Hong Kong Journalists Association, Civic Party, Labor Party and Democratic Party.

Over 37,000 NGOs, with staff in the tens of thousands are registered in Hong Kong, many of which receive funding from the U.S. and Europe.

Martin Lee, founder of the Democratic Party, a member organization of the Civil Human Rights Front met with U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo during the protests. Pompeo expressed support for the protests at the meeting. If the protests are in fact serving a progressive end, they would not be supported by the reactionary leadership of U.S. imperialism, the very force attempting to carry out a coup in Venezuela, threatening Peoples Korea and trying to start a war with Iran.

Hong Kong's independent judicial/legal system is a relic British colonialism. Nowhere else in the world does a city have independent extradition laws, with authority above that of a sovereign country.

Despite decades of multi-million dollar western funding Hong Kong has a poverty rate of 20% (23.1% for children) compared to less than 1% in mainland China. In the past 20 years poverty in Hong Kong has remained high while mainland China has lifted hundreds of millions of people out of poverty. Recent protests, much like the 'Occupy Central' protests in Hong Kong in 2014 have not raised this issue. The protests have been directed at leadership connected to mainland China while ignoring the U.S. connected banks and ultra wealthy capitalists based in Hong Kong who clearly show no interest in addressing poverty or other desperate needs.

The U.S. claims to be concerned with free speech and politically motivated extraditions, while it aggressively pursues the extradition of Julian Assange for exposing the crimes of U.S. imperialism.

The corporate media in the U.S. and Europe have enthusiastically reported on Hong Kong protests, in stark contrast to the meager, often critical coverage of mass protests in Gaza, Honduras, Sudan, Yemen, France or the recent general strike in Brazil. The difference in coverage exposes a difference in the forces behind the protests, a difference in who stands to benefit from them.

U.S. imperialism has a long history of 'color revolutions' in which protests with a progressive, even revolutionary patina are used as cover for a reactionary, pro U.S. agenda.

The world finance capital forces in Hong Kong are allied with U.S. imperialism and opposed to socialist ownership and the leadership of China by the Chinese Communist Party.

U.S. Hands Off China! Hong Kong is part of China!

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