

Commentary



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Hong Kong – A Way Forward: How the free world will respond to Beijing’s Crackdown

From border spats against India, to air incursions over the Taiwan Strait, to increasing assertiveness in the East and South China Seas, 2020 has seen a clear escalation of China’s authoritarian ambitions on all fronts. Perhaps most notably, Beijing has seized upon this moment of international disorder to break its promise to the world and subjugate Hong Kong.

Through a so-called “National Security Law” imposed over the territory, China has managed to effectively eliminate Hong Kong’s cherished freedoms. Now, the question becomes: how will Western nations work together to respond?

On September 22, MLI hosted a webinar that brought together some of the world’s leading voices to provide insights on the situation facing Hong Kong and what the democratic nations of the world should do to push back. We are pleased to release an edited transcript of the comments from our speakers.

Charles Burton:

Welcome friends in Canada and abroad to this webinar: Hong Kong — A Way Forward After China’s Security Law, sponsored by the Macdonald-Laurier Institute in partnership with Hong Kong Watch, the European Values Center for Security Policy, Optimum Publishing and the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China (IPAC).

My name is Charles Burton. I’m a senior fellow at the Macdonald-Laurier Institute and non-resident senior fellow at the European Values Center for Security Policy.

We have a remarkably strong program today, and hundreds of people watching live throughout the world and I’m sure many more who will pick it up on YouTube, so let me get straight into it.

Our first speaker is Dean Baxendale. Mr. Baxendale is the president and publisher of Optimum Publishing International. It’s a publishing house focused on public policy on politics, global espionage, and transnational crime. His most recent offering is the Canadian edition of Clive Hamilton and Mareike Ohlberg’s excellent new book, *Hidden Hand: Exposing How the Chinese Communist Party is Reshaping the World*.

Dean Baxendale:

Good morning, everybody. And good afternoon and good evening, wherever you might be throughout the world.

The genesis of this event stems from our launch of *Hidden Hand* with MLI in late June. I was introduced to Ben Rogers, and we started talking with Charles Burton about a multilateral approach to taking on China, and that’s where this event started happening and we engaged a number of different partners.

How can one of the world’s most freewheeling cities transition from a vibrant, global centre of culture and finance into the subject of authoritarian control? If Beijing has its way, it will happen swiftly and without any more opposition.

In 2019, the world was transfixed on protests for freedom, reported by some media outlets as “dangerous” or “involving criminal

elements.” No matter how Beijing tried to promote that narrative, most of the rest of the free world was having none of it.

Now, the citizens face a life or death struggle to name their rights, freedoms and an objective rule of law. It’s now up the leaders of all free nations to unify and speak loudly to China. Be it *Magnitsky Act* sanctions against officials, or bans, or tariffs on imports from China, or perhaps boycotting the 2022 Olympics, China must be stopped in their totalitarian march towards authoritarian rule worldwide.

First it was Tibetans, recently the Uyghurs and now Hong Kong. What’s next, Taiwan, control of the South China Sea, Africa and the Middle East? If any, or all, fall to China, your freedoms are next. Legislators and world leaders must support a new framework and action, administered by IPAC or a new multilateral institution.

The vision I have is the Freedom of Nations Institute, which would coordinate the efforts to combat China and other totalitarian regimes, using our own soft and sharp diplomacy tactics, a truly unique global agency.

As you are all aware, we are engaged in an asymmetrical war that many had no idea we were in. The battle is for our individual and collective freedoms, but China, run by the CCP, has embedded itself firmly in all liberal democracies. By working closely together as nations, with the aid of our security and military intelligence agencies and guided by mutually defined goals and objectives, we can expect a free world to be successful in pushing back and holding China to account. The status quo is not good enough.

Today, we’ll hear so many more policy ideas and recommendations from our stellar panel of speakers on preserving and protecting our rights and freedoms by supporting Hong Kong citizens.

Thank you very much.

Charles Burton:

Next we have a selection from the book *Hidden Hand: Exposing How the Chinese Communist Party is Reshaping the World*, which will be read by Mareike Ohlberg.

Mareike is a senior fellow in the Asia program of the German Marshall Fund. She previously worked at the Mercator Institute for China Studies, in addition to a distinguished list of publications, including those on Chinese influence operations in Europe. She’s published opinion pieces in *The New York Times*, *Foreign Affairs*, and elsewhere. Her reading is titled, “China’s Foreign Interfer-

Mareike Ohlberg:

Democratic institutions and the global order built after the Second World War have proven to be more fragile than imagined, and are vulnerable to the new weapons of political warfare now deployed against them.

The Chinese Communist Party is exploiting the weaknesses of democratic systems in order to undermine them, and while many in the West remain reluctant to acknowledge this, democracies urgently need to become more resilient if they are to survive.

Many Chinese people living in the West, along with Tibetans, Uyghurs, Falun Gong practitioners and Hong Kong democracy activists, are at the forefront of the CCP’s repression and live in a constant state of fear.

Governments, academic institutions and business executives are afraid of financial retaliation should they incur Beijing’s wrath. This fear is contagious and toxic. It must not be normalized as the price nations have to pay for prosperity.

As Beijing is emboldened by the feebleness of resistance, its tactics of coercion and intimidation are being used against an increasingly broad spectrum of people. Even for those who do not feel the heavy hand of the CCP directly, the world is changing, as Beijing’s authoritarian norms are exported around the globe.

People who live in close proximity to China understand this much better than do most in the West. It is this understanding that has fuelled the recent protests in Hong Kong, and led to the re-election in January 2020 of Taiwan’s President Tsai Ing-wen.

Anxiety about the CCP’s activities crosses political boundaries, not least within the US Congress where Democrats and Republicans have formed an alliance to challenge Beijing. The same applies in Europe. Despite their other disagreements, people from the left and the right can agree that China under the CCP is a grave threat not only to human rights, but to national sovereignty.

According to a Chinese government’s spokesperson it is “futile for a handful of Hong Kong people collaborating with foreign forces to intervene in Hong Kong affairs.”

The actual number of people who oppose CCP policies, be they at home or abroad, doesn’t actually matter – the CCP will always claim that is it small. This is vital to its claim to legitimacy. How-

ever, especially in the international context, where the party has nothing close to an information monopoly, this kind of framing requires other opponents of CCP policy to remain quiet when not directly attacked. If they were to speak up on behalf of those attacked, it would contradict the party's narrative. This explains why the CCP has been so forcefully pushing the idea that quiet diplomacy behind the scenes is more effective than vocal diplomacy. Unfortunately, many around the world have fallen for this ploy, allowing themselves to be manipulated.

Now in closing, I want to say something that's not in the book but that I think is very important, and that is that the West has done far too much to accommodate the CCP. But, most Westerners are not actually the ones who have to live with the consequences of this action. Hopefully today is another sign that people around the world are willing to stand up for Hong Kong, and will listen to those people who have the most in the game, the people of Hong Kong.

Charles Burton:

Our next speaker is the Baron Patten of Barnes. Lord Patten of Barnes is the Chancellor of Oxford University. He has served in the cabinet of the Government of the United Kingdom and is Chairman of the Conservative Party, as well as senior positions in Foreign and Security Policy and the European Commission. And prior to that, he undertook a major study of policing in Northern Ireland, which had a very positive impact. He is widely regarded as Britain's most influential Roman Catholic for his work with the Vatican.

From 1992 to 1997, Lord Patten was Governor of the British Crown Colony of Hong Kong, and I would say it's pretty apparent, I think to all of us that due to his outstanding work in that capacity, Lord Patten retains the considerable affection and respect of people in Hong Kong to this day, even 23 years later.

Lord Patten of Barnes:

Thank you very much for that introduction. And can I say how much I agree with the main arguments in this book. I think it's very important that we talk openly about United Front activity pursued by China just as we used to about similar activity pursued by Russia, which seems to be happening again under the "Novichok" regime in Moscow.

I wanted to talk first of all, briefly, about what's happened in Hong Kong. Secondly, about why I think it's happened. And thirdly,

about what I think we should do about it.

What's happened in Hong Kong is known to us all. Hong Kong has prospered mightily with a free economy, free speech, the rule of law and an independent judiciary, and all the freedoms and liberties we associate with an open society, and as well civil society, vibrant and extremely active right across the board.

And what has happened in Hong Kong under the Beijing regime is because of Xi Jinping's obsession with the threat represented by liberal democratic values to China. We've seen the biggest assault on freedom and liberty in any city, I think, in the 21st century, certainly as big as anywhere else.

And what the Chinese have done is to destroy all those elements, or set out to destroy all those elements, which have made Hong Kong so successful and have given their citizens of Hong Kong such an admirable place to live in.

When I was Governor of Hong Kong, my main critic was a diplomat called Sir Percy Cradock. And Percy Cradock used to say very openly about the Chinese leadership, "Well they're thuggish dictators, but they're men of their word." Well, we know now that at least part of that is true. They're certainly thuggish dictators, as Ben Rogers and others have pointed out in Xinjiang, where the Chinese Communist Party is engaged in what pretty well amounts genocide in that territory against the Muslims.

What they are doing in Hong Kong is to destroy what was promised, a high degree of autonomy: "one country, two systems." And they're doing that in a way that will give Taiwan even greater room for thought because I'm sure that what they're doing in Hong Kong, they would like to do one day in Taiwan.

Why is it happening? Hong Kong went pretty well for about 10 years after the handover in 1997. Then Xi Jinping came to power and I think Xi Jinping and some of his colleagues were obsessively concerned about the threat to Communist power in China, represented by globalization, represented by the Internet, represented by urbanization. And they set out from the beginning, probably before 2013 and probably 2011, when they produced a document advocating greater control of culture, education, religion, civil society, and so on. They've set out to assault all those reflections of liberal democracy, which they think represent some sort of threat to Chinese Communist leadership.

We know very well that the main concern of the Chinese Communist Party isn't the welfare of the people, or this or that foreign policy objective; it's to hold onto power. And to a considerable

extent, Hong Kong represents all those things, all those elements, all those values which China is nervous about. Whether it's free speech, whether it's a recognition of the universality of human rights, whether it's the determination to provide an education which is open, which teaches people what's going on rather than what the Chinese Communist Party wants them to think.

What China has put in place is an example, I suppose the biggest so far, of technical totalitarianism, and I think the only way we will be able to ensure that our own values are robust in protecting us against that is by working together.

And it's particularly relevant to what's happening in Hong Kong. I don't think the Chinese Communist Party is brilliant. I think this decade may represent what's called "peak China." China has awful problems to deal with, whether it's drought, whether it's demography, whether it's debt and all sorts of other issues as well. And I think what's very important, both in relation to Hong Kong and in relation to dealing with China as a whole, is for liberal democracies to stand up for what we believe in and to call out examples of United Front activity which seeks to undermine it.

And I think, in particular, we need to work together as parliamentary democracies. I hope parliamentary committees in each country will follow what's happening in Hong Kong. I hope we'll support those organizations, human rights groups and so on, like Hong Kong Watch, like Amnesty, which follow what's happening in Hong Kong. I hope that we'll support the pressure for UN rapporteurs. I think it's very important to provide lifelines for young Hong Kongers with bursaries at our universities in Anglophone countries. I think all those things are absolutely vital.

But above all, we've got to recognize that unless we stand up for the values which we feel so strongly about, they'll be steadily and stealthily undermined by those, for example, who in the education sector believe in China in what Stalin called "engineering of the soul." We've got to make sure that that doesn't happen in our Western societies, and we've got to make sure that those who are part of this United Front hostility to liberal democracy are exposed.

Charles Burton:

Next, we have a recording of remarks by Anna Fotyga. Ms. Fotyga serves as a Member of the European Parliament. She was Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland in 2006 and 2007, and subsequently served as Chief of the Chancellery of the President of Poland.

Anna Fotyga:

Good morning, greetings from the European Parliament. We've just concluded the plenary session of the Parliament, and the topics of piracy, and in particular human rights, were very high on the agenda.

I would like to assure you that the situation in Hong Kong has been constantly quite high in our deliberations. There is a large group of MEPs over political divisions that are very much dedicated to close monitoring the human citizens and political rights of free society of Hong Kong. We are aware of a very dramatic human rights situation there, starting with imposing of the famous extradition law.

It is also extremely important how we define our relationship with China. We have to take into account not only this systemic rivalry between our systems and China's. It is much more; China is engaged in massive violence against a variety of groups of its own society.

I would like to tell clearly, here in the European Parliament, we exert our rights. We fulfill our mandates. There are many MEPs engaged in the so-called Hong Kong Watch group, and we intend to pursue this issue, to stand by the democratic opposition of Hong Kong, and make public events of violence there.

Elections in Hong Kong that were expected to happen in September were postponed, most probably for one year. That means that the power there unfortunately serves as puppets of authority, and loses legitimacy in view of the world and in view of its own citizens; it should be improved. Once more, we stand by people of Hong Kong.

Charles Burton:

Now, we move into the panel discussion section of this presentation today. And our first speaker is Dr. Miles Yu, US Secretary of State's Michael Pompeo's principle China policy and planning advisor. He has played a key role in the reshaping America's China policy over the past three years, advising Mr. Pompeo, as Mr. Pompeo has put it, "On how to ensure that we protect Americans and secure our freedoms on the face of challenges from the Chinese Communist Party."

After earning a doctorate from the University of California at Berkeley, Dr. Yu became professor of Modern China and Military History at the Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland.

In the past three years, Dr. Yu has been a powerful behind the scenes force within the Trump administration, reshaping U.S. policies towards China, which has been redefined as America's most significant strategic adversary. Dr. Yu calls the new China approach, "principled realism."

Retired Air Force Brigadier General David Stilwell, currently assistant secretary of state for East Asia and Pacific Affairs, has said, "Miles Yu is a national treasure. He understands the difference between democratic and authoritarian governance and can explain it better than anyone I know."

So, Dr. Yu, on that basis looking forward to hearing your remarks, you have seven minutes.

Miles Yu:

Thank you, Charles. And that biography you just read has already landed me the number one traitor to the Chinese race in modern history, according to Chinese official press.

Thank you for this great opportunity, for me to share my thoughts with the colleagues here and friends around the world.

Now, Hong Kong, in my view, is a grand experiment that has failed miserably. This grand experiment contained the following four elements. Number one, it is experimenting in this scheme called the "one country, two systems" formula. And what happened in Hong Kong in the last couple of years has proven that this indeed is nothing but a bankrupt idea. It's a bankrupt idea because of its inner contradiction. "One country" presumably appeals to nationalism, national unification, which by itself is a pretty good thing. What if this national rule is under an autocratic regime? The people in Hong Kong seem to have said national unification will be minimalist without political freedom.

Now West Germans would not have united with East Germans if East Germany was still ruled by Eric Honecker and its Communist Party in that country. You have the same kind of logic and situation going on in the Korean Peninsula: people would not be united under a totalitarian regime. So, nationalistic pride cannot take the place of liberty and individual freedom; that's the message of what happened in Hong Kong. And I think the people in Hong Kong have chosen the system of freedom and the rule of law, not the system of communist autocracy in the name of national unification.

Therefore, this "one country, two systems" experiment has failed. It has also failed because it has completely lost its exemplary ef-

fect on Taiwan, as Lord Patten had alluded to earlier. So the one country, two system experiment proved to be a total failure in this lab called Hong Kong.

The second element of this grand experiment in Hong Kong is actually an experiment in the validity of a model of governance. Mao Zedong famously said that the Chinese Communist Party has three “magic weapons”: United Front, arms struggle and party building.

Now, the Chinese Communist Party has predominantly used the first one – the United Front – as a magic weapon to rule Hong Kong for most of its time since 1997.

The United Front, in this case, is basically a top-down, elite capturing approach. You basically capture the elites of Hong Kong, the socially reputable, the billionaires. If they control the elite, then Hong Kong will be stable to the Communist Party’s liking. And the people at the bottom, the vast majority of the people in Hong Kong, do not really matter, or matter very little, or are symbolic only.

So what had happened in Hong Kong last year? In particular, the mass and persistent protests showed that people disagree with that kind of approach. The battle hymn on the street of Hong Kong is this song from *Les Misérables* “Do You Hear People’s Roar of Anger?” And it’s very powerful, it’s the people’s power. People even say it’s Tiananmen people’s movement all over again. So this is basically to prove that CCPs model of governance by capturing elite through Hong Kong has failed because it’s not really working.

We cannot blame the citizens alone, because Hong Kong’s elites should also bear responsibility as well. And Carrie Lam and her government have proved to have been very callous toward people’s demands. In this way, she’s pretty reprehensible. We have urged her to heed people’s voices, people’s demands through open or closed door channels and nothing seems to work. There is the Hong Kong elite’s cowardice and opportunism also is to be blamed.

The third element is also an experiment to test the validity of the Chinese Communist Party’s trustworthiness. Hong Kong is a grand bargain mostly because it’s a constant metre to monitor the CCPs credit scores since 1984. Hong Kong is first and foremost a promise made by the CCP in 1984. It’s a promise of a high degree of autonomy for 50 years, backed by judicial independence, free press, individual liberty, the rule of law. This promise was made. This promise has been broken. You might say it’s been broken in

a very brutal and a semi-fascist way. The Hong Kong abomination, as we see it now, proved that the CCP cannot be trusted and this should be a huge reputational cost to the CCP, because a country without credibility cannot be the leader of the world.

Lastly, I will say the Hong Kong experiment is also experiment in hope. This is the hope within a larger hope for China as a whole.

All-in-all, the Hong Kong experiment, in my opinion, for the last 23 years, has been nothing but a spectacular flop in history. Let me use the remaining minutes I have to briefly talk about what has the US government done in response to the Hong Kong event.

We have urged the Hong Kong government – particularly Chief Executive Carrie Lam – to be more responsive to people’s voice, and we assist the leaders throughout the whole event last year. And we also offer support for pro-democracy protest. Vice-President Pence and Secretary Pompeo met with Jimmy Lai, Martin Lee, Anson Chan and Nathan Law, who is here, and also other democracy advocates in Hong Kong.

The president, for most of the first term of his administration, has been focused on a phase one trade deal with China. But he was willing to put his trade deal on the line to prevent the CCP from directly participating in a violent suppression of the Hong Kong protests. This is very important to the president. The Hong Kong issue was the only issue the president was willing to sacrifice his China trade deal for.

And in a realistic assessment of Hong Kong’s autonomy backsliding, Secretary Pompeo decertified Hong Kong’s high degree of autonomy. We sent that report to Congress and followed by the president declaration of ending of special treatment for Hong Kong. And we also re-evaluated the 1992 *Hong Kong Policy Act*, and also followed the 2018 *Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act* passed by the Congress, unanimously by the way. We also sanctioned key Hong Kong and the PRC government officials for ending Hong Kong’s freedom and autonomy.

And lastly, we have just about 12 treaties and MOUs we have signed with the Hong Kong government and we’re getting rid of them one by one now.

I will end here. Thank you.

Charles Burton:

Our next speaker is Nathan Law. Nathan was one of the key student leaders during the 79-day Umbrella Movement in 2014, and

secretary general of the Hong Kong Federation of Students. He was the founding chairman of Demosisto, a political party that emerged out of the protest movement.

In September 2016, at the age of 23-years, Nathan was elected to serve as a legislator for Hong Kong Island, making him the youngest lawmaker in the history of the Legislative Council of Hong Kong. His office was challenged by the Hong Kong government and he was disqualified from the Legislative Council in July 2017. He subsequently served a period in prison in Hong Kong for his role in storming the Civic Square in Hong Kong in 2014.

Presently, he is an MA student at Yale, I understand in East Asian studies. And I think has many important things to say about what we should be doing to better respond to the tragedy in Hong Kong.

Nathan Law:

Thank you, Charles. This is a good opportunity for me to express what they still look like under the rule of the national security law in Hong Kong because I think people are curious about that.

In Hong Kong, a lot of political activists and protesters are in grave danger because the national security law allows the Hong Kong government to prosecute them just because of their speeches. We're in a new era that the government could easily prosecute an individual just because of their Facebook post or just because they have a certain slogan. The law, in particular, is designed to quash the freedom of expression of Hong Kong people and to end peaceful demonstrations. This is the first indication of the law.

The second one is to destroy the social fabric. On the one hand, it basically quashed the freedoms that we have, but on the other hand, its target is also civic society. By having the law in place, a lot of institutions could quote the law and suppress the freedom of expression of the individuals in their institutions. For example, in the education sector, the education bureau and the schools could ask students not to discuss certain topics and to restructure the curriculum not to encourage critical thinking, but to promote the Communist Party's agenda.

And for the media, they could restrict and regulate the media outlets and to ask them not to seek for truth, but to promote the propaganda from state media and the government.

And for the academics, they could restrain academics from doing, for example, posts about certain topics that may irritate Beijing, or in the research, avoiding certain topics that would embarrass

the authority.

I think for the next phase, we need to be very aware of the political dissidence and prosecutions. But on the other hand, we should be actively monitoring these arenas of civic societies and to engage them actively because this damage is not as obvious and physical, compared to those very autocratic prosecutions on political activists. International organizations should be very aware of Hong Kong's situation and engage actively, including by protecting academic freedom, press freedom and also freedom under a just education.

Charles Burton:

Our next speaker is Benedict Rogers. Mr. Rogers is the co-founder and the deputy chairman of the British Conservative Party's Human Rights Commission and the co-founder of the International Coalition to Stop Crimes Against Humanity in North Korea (ICNK). He is also a member of the advisory group of the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China, and an advisor to the World Uyghur Congress. He is also the East Asia team leader of Christian Solidarity Worldwide, the founder and now the executive director of Hong Kong Watch.

Benedict Rogers:

It's a privilege to be on this distinguished panel. Let me just start by saying that Lord Patten and I did not confer in advance on what would both say, but my remarks very closely mirror his, which I take as both reassurance that I'm on the right line, even if it's a little bit repetitive and I'll try to avoid repeating too much. But I wanted to raise three questions: What's happened to Hong Kong? Why does it matter? And what do we do about it? And I have a three-point plan of suggestions for what to do about it.

Very briefly, what's happened is nothing short of an all-out assault on Hong Kong's freedoms, autonomy, the rule of law and way of life, a flagrant breach of an international treaty and the transformation of one of Asia's freest and most open cities into a place of fear and repression. And of course, this has not just happened as the result of the national security law but has been going on in various ways over the last decade.

The example of Nathan's disqualification, in a very tiny way, I had a taste of it myself in 2017 when I think I was the first foreign activist to be denied entry to Hong Kong by Beijing. Of course, that was followed by a long line of foreigners, including the *Financial Times* journalist and the executive director of Human

Rights Watch. But the crisis that we've seen over the last year has escalated beyond anything that I could have predicted: the police brutality and of course now, the national security law.

Why does this matter? Well I would say firstly because Beijing has broken its promises, breached a treaty and threatened the international rules-based order.

Secondly, because Hong Kong has been a major global financial centre, a vital hub in the region for media and civil society, and a gateway to the region, all of that is now endangered.

And thirdly, and most importantly, because Hong Kong is the frontline in the fight for freedom against authoritarianism. If Hong Kong's freedoms are completely lost, and if the Chinese regime is allowed to get away with what they've done, then we can be sure that they won't stop there. Taiwan is already in its sights, and beyond Taiwan are our freedoms too. So this is not simply a battle for the freedoms of the people of Hong Kong and the promises made to them, it's a battle for freedom itself.

So what do we do? Well, I propose a three-pronged approach, and this overlaps with some of Lord Patten's recommendations.

Firstly, I think there should be a punitive response. We need targeted Magnitsky sanctions against officials in the Chinese and Hong Kong governments. Not sanctions against the people of China or Hong Kong, but against those directly responsible. And the United States has already led the way in that regard.

Secondly, a diplomatic response, the establishment of a UN special envoy or special rapporteur for human rights as has been called for by at least 50 current UN special rapporteurs and others.

And thirdly, a humanitarian response, a rescue package to ensure that Hong Kong activists now in grave danger who don't hold British national overseas passports have a place of sanctuary to flee to.

The free world, in short, must unite. We need an international contact group to coordinate efforts among like-minded countries, bringing together both Western democracies with our allies in the Asia-Pacific region to ensure that there's a clear, robust, united and high-impact response.

Some of these things have already been done. Much more needs to be done, if we are to ensure that the Chinese Communist Party pays the highest possible price for their appalling behaviour and that we defend the frontlines of freedom, both for those to whom we have a duty and for ourselves, too.

Charles Burton:

Our final speaker is Garnett Genuis. Mr. Genuis is the Conservative Member of the Canadian House of Commons for Sherwood Park, Fort Saskatchewan, Alberta. And he is the shadow minister for International Development and Human Rights. And he is also co-chair of the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China.

Garnett Genuis:

It's an honour for me to be here as part of this webinar.

Much has been said already, of course, about the situation in Hong Kong and the particulars of what is happening there.

I wanted to focus my introductory remarks on some of the global implications, in particular the implications for Canada and how Canada should respond. I think there's two ways in which we can think about the global impact of what is happening in Hong Kong.

The first is just recognizing the critical importance of the universal jurisdiction that is claimed through the national security law, that this represents a threat to the rule of law and not just in Hong Kong but in every country around the world. Canadian citizens in Canada already report significant intimidation by the Government of China and actors who they back, when those people are speaking out about issues of justice and human rights and rule of law in Hong Kong. This raises the very real concern that Canadians, even legislators, could face charges under the national security law, be picked up in Hong Kong or extradited from other countries. We have a Canadian citizen, Huseyin Celil, who was kidnapped in Uzbekistan. He didn't even travel to China and he's been detained in China for over a decade. This claim of universal jurisdiction is a clear and present threat to the security of people all over the world and it's something that requires a strong, focused response.

But the second way in which we need to think about the global implications of what's happening in Hong Kong is what it tells us about the most important conflict of the 21st century. As I said in a speech to the House of Commons in May, Hong Kong provides the key to understanding the challenges and conflicts that now confront us in the 21st century – specifically, the nature of the conflict between countries like ours and the PRC.

There are two ways of framing this conflict. One is cultural. The Government of China would like to say that China is different, culturally. The political differences flow from cultural differences and we just have to accept that. And there are many voices in the

West, including Canada's current ambassador to China, who have parroted something like this line, explaining political differences on the basis of differences of culture. That's one way of framing the conflict.

Another way of framing the conflict is to understand it as a struggle between free peoples and oppressive governments, a struggle that we see in all kinds of different cultural contexts.

But we need to recognize, first of all, the way in which China's history, traditions, and Confucian culture align themselves very well with democracy. But we should also recognize, as Tony Blair said so eloquently, "Anywhere, anytime ordinary people are given a chance to choose, the choice is always the same: freedom, not tyranny; democracy, not dictatorship; and the rule of law, not the rule of secret police."

So what is the appropriate framing of the conflict between the PRC and countries like ours? Is it about a cultural clash or is it about the clash between oppressive governments and free peoples? The key to answering that question is, I think, in Hong Kong, as well as in similar sense in Taiwan. In both Hong Kong and in Taiwan, we see people who have the same cultural heritage, who are Chinese, who speak Chinese languages, and they desire freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law. That demonstrates so well that this is not a question of a clash of cultures. Chinese people, whether in Hong Kong, Taiwan or on the mainland, when given a choice, they choose freedom and democracy and we should stand behind that.

There are three things that Canada needs to do in response to these events.

First, protect ourselves: pass tough new legislation dealing with foreign interference and combatting this claim of universal jurisdiction as well as stand up for Canadians who are kidnapped or detained.

Second, to follow many of the great points made by Benedict, we need to be principled in our defence of justice, human rights and international law, and we need to prioritize these things.

Third, we need to seek multilateral partnerships with other countries. We need to work together as like-minded countries on this issue. But multilateral collaboration is not an excuse for countries to do nothing and wait for somebody else to act first. Multilateral collaboration means that we should be willing to step out and act to do what is right but also seek partnerships in the process.

Charles Burton:

Thank you very much. On behalf of the Macdonald-Laurier Institute, Hong Kong Watch, the European Value Center for Security Policy, Optimum Publishing and the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China, thank you very much participating in this webinar – and thank you to our audience for attending. And to anyone from Hong Kong who has tuned in today, you know that we're all behind you and look forward to assisting you in any way we can to ensure a peaceful, prosperous and democratic future for Hong Kong.



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Independent and non-partisan, the Macdonald-Laurier Institute is increasingly recognized as the thought leader on national issues in Canada, prodding governments, opinion leaders and the general public to accept nothing but the very best public policy solutions for the challenges Canada faces.



About the Macdonald-Laurier Institute

What Do We Do?

When you change how people think, you change what they want and how they act. That is why thought leadership is essential in every field. At MLI, we strip away the complexity that makes policy issues unintelligible and present them in a way that leads to action, to better quality policy decisions, to more effective government, and to a more focused pursuit of the national interest of all Canadians. MLI is the only non-partisan, independent national public policy think tank based in Ottawa that focuses on the full range of issues that fall under the jurisdiction of the federal government.

What Is in a Name?

The Macdonald-Laurier Institute exists not merely to burnish the splendid legacy of two towering figures in Canadian history – Sir John A. Macdonald and Sir Wilfrid Laurier – but to renew that legacy. A Tory and a Grit, an English speaker and a French speaker – these two men represent the very best of Canada’s fine political tradition. As prime minister, each championed the values that led to Canada assuming her place as one of the world’s leading democracies. We will continue to vigorously uphold these values, the cornerstones of our nation.



Working for a Better Canada

Good policy doesn’t just happen; it requires good ideas, hard work, and being in the right place at the right time. In other words, it requires MLI. We pride ourselves on independence, and accept no funding from the government for our research. If you value our work and if you believe in the possibility of a better Canada, consider making a tax-deductible donation. The Macdonald-Laurier Institute is a registered charity.

Our Issues

The Institute undertakes an impressive program of thought leadership on public policy. Some of the issues we have tackled recently include:

- Aboriginal people and the management of our natural resources;
- Making Canada’s justice system more fair and efficient;
- Defending Canada’s innovators and creators;
- Controlling government debt at all levels;
- Advancing Canada’s interests abroad;
- Ottawa’s regulation of foreign investment; and
- How to fix Canadian health care.

constructive *important* *forward-thinking*
high-quality *insightful*
active

Celebrating 10 years

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING ABOUT MLI

The Right Honourable Paul Martin

I want to congratulate the **Macdonald-Laurier Institute** for 10 years of excellent service to Canada. The Institute's commitment to public policy innovation has put them on the cutting edge of many of the country's most pressing policy debates. The Institute works in a persistent and constructive way to present new and insightful ideas about how to best achieve Canada's potential and to produce a better and more just country. Canada is better for the forward-thinking, research-based perspectives that the **Macdonald-Laurier Institute** brings to our most critical issues.

The Honourable Jody Wilson-Raybould

The **Macdonald-Laurier Institute** has been active in the field of Indigenous public policy, building a fine tradition of working with Indigenous organizations, promoting Indigenous thinkers and encouraging innovative, Indigenous-led solutions to the challenges of 21st century Canada. I congratulate **MLI** on its 10 productive and constructive years and look forward to continuing to learn more about the Institute's fine work in the field.

The Honourable Irwin Cotler

May I congratulate **MLI** for a decade of exemplary leadership on national and international issues. Through high-quality research and analysis, **MLI** has made a significant contribution to Canadian public discourse and policy development. With the global resurgence of authoritarianism and illiberal populism, such work is as timely as it is important. I wish you continued success in the years to come.

The Honourable Pierre Poilievre

The **Macdonald-Laurier Institute** has produced countless works of scholarship that solve today's problems with the wisdom of our political ancestors. If we listen to the **Institute's** advice, we can fulfill Laurier's dream of a country where freedom is its nationality.

M A C D O N A L D - L A U R I E R I N S T I T U T E



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