

An Unwelcome Presence: U.S. Interference in Hong Kong Since 2007

Shen Benqiu

In 1982, China and Great Britain started negotiating the handover of Hong Kong. As a bystander nation, the United States had taken a low-key attitude, only showing its “interest in maintaining Hong Kong’s prosperity and stability.” However, since President George H. W. Bush assumed power in 1989, the United States has been consistently interfering in China’s policy of “One country two systems” implemented in Hong Kong. As a result, the “Sino-US Hong Kong issue” came out on top of the “Sino-UK Hong Kong issue.” America’s intervention was mainly reflected in three areas: the development of Hong Kong’s political system, human rights, and Hong Kong’s high-level autonomy. With respect to Hong Kong’s political development, the United States sought to promote its democratization as soon as possible, so that the United States could inculcate Western ideologies into the Chinese mainland by demonstrating democratic ideas and lifestyle in Hong Kong. Following the principle of advancing Hong Kong’s democracy in a gradual way, which was stipulated in the “Basic Law of Hong Kong”

Dr. Shen Benqiu is Associate Research Fellow at Department of International Business English, Guangzhou University.

and interpreted by China's National People's Congress (NPC) at the end of 2007, Hong Kong would begin electing its Chief Executive based on universal suffrage by 2017 and have direct elections of its Legislative Council (LegCo) members by 2020. However, the US government criticized this schedule as being too prolonged, in turn requiring more freedom given to Hong Kong by the Standing Committee of the NPC so that Hong Kong residents could enjoy democracy by 2012. Regarding Hong Kong's human rights practices, the United States on the one hand pointed out that China's principle of safeguarding national security and maintaining national sovereignty was above that of protecting human rights upheld by the Hong Kong people. On the other hand, America indicated that Hong Kong citizens' rights in reforming the government as well as Hong Kong LegCo's capacity in affecting policy-making were restricted, thus demanding the abolition of the functional constituencies in the LegCo. Regarding Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy, the United States already emphasized its autonomous status in the "United States-Hong Kong Policy Act" enacted back in 1992, which stipulated that if the US President determined Hong Kong was not sufficiently autonomous on or after July 1, 1997, the President would issue an executive order suspending the application of Section 201 of the Act, which granted special legal status to Hong Kong. The "special legal status" referred to the preferential treatment granted to Hong Kong in its bilateral and multilateral economic activities as a semi-national entity within the capitalist economic system.

From 1989 to 2007, America's interference in Hong Kong's affairs became more extensive and high profile. First, Washington published annual reports on the implementation of the "United States-Hong Kong Policy Act", which illustrated the US's policy towards Hong Kong while supervising and criticizing Hong Kong's political development, its human rights practices, and

the lacking level of its autonomy in alliance with the Country Reports on Human Rights Practices published annually by the State Department. Secondly, the US government exerted direct pressure on the PRC side through high-level diplomatic visits. Before 2007, top-ranking US officials, such as former President George W. Bush, former Vice President Dick Cheney, and former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, had discussed Hong Kong issues with Chinese leaders on various occasions. Thirdly, the US government frequently expressed its concern over Hong Kong's affairs through public statements issued by the State Department and the American Consulate-General in Hong Kong. Fourth, high-ranking American officials openly received key members of the Hong Kong "opposition camp." Martin Lee Chu-ming was received by former President Bill Clinton and Secretary of State Rice in all his official visits to the United States.

Since 2007, the United States has changed its previous approach of publicly denouncing China, instead taking quite a different path when dealing with Hong Kong issues. This article will give an analysis of these changes.

I. Approaches of US Interference in Hong Kong's Affairs Since 2007

When interpreting the "Basic Law" in 2007, the NPC made it clear that Hong Kong would elect its Chief Executive based on universal suffrage by 2017 and choose its legislators through direct elections by 2020. Since roughly 2007, the United States has gradually shifted its policy towards Hong Kong by reducing public pressure on the Chinese government while deepening its substantial intervention in Hong Kong affairs.

1. Integrating the "Pan-democracy camp" of Hong Kong

Starting in around 2007, US consular officials began frequently

meeting with key members of the “Pan-democracy camp” in Hong Kong, attempting to unite its main leaders. Washington was aware that it must integrate and enlarge “pan-democracy” forces in order to play the crucial role in the elections of the Chief Executive and the LegCo beginning in 2017. In 2006, Cardinal Joseph Zen Ze-kium of the Hong Kong Catholic Church, Mr. Lai Chee-ying, founder of the Next Media Ltd and the *Apple Daily*, and the major icon of the “Pan-democracy camp,” Mr. Lee Chu-ming, made a pilgrimage to the Vatican, triggering extensive social concern in Hong Kong. Thereafter, Washington came to realize that Hong Kong’s media (Lai Chee-ying), political (Lee Chu-ming) and religious (Zen Ze-kium) forces could be united to wield profound influence on Hong Kong’s politics. US consular officials frequently contacted the three figures, hoping to strengthen the leading power of the “Pan-democracy camp” step by step. During the by-election of the Hong Kong Island District Council at the end of 2007, Anson Chan competed against and defeated Ip Lau Suk-yee with encouragement and support from Lee Chu-ming, Lai Chee-ying, and Zen Ze-kium. From the US’s perspective, the four key leaders of Hong Kong’s “Pan-democracy camp” came into existence then.

In 2009, the Civic Party and the League of Social Democrats from the “Pan Democracy camp” jointly initiated a “five-district referendum” in five geographical constituencies—Hong Kong Island, Kowloon East, Kowloon West, New Territories East, and New Territories West. Advocating the theme of “fighting for real universal suffrage and abolishing functional constituencies,” they decided that one legislator from each constituency should resign and turn the by-election into a “de facto referendum” under the banner of “five-district referendum, with all people uprising.” The motion met extensive opposition from the Pro-Establishment camp in Hong Kong. As the voting results demonstrated, although the five resigned Pan-democracy legislators were

re-elected, the voter turnout was only 17.1%, indicating the “five-district referendum” was not heavily supported by Hong Kong citizens. After the election, Lee Chu-ming retired and the “Pan-democracy” camp was in need of a new spiritual leader. Anson Chan and Allen Lee recommended Eu Yuet-mee as Lee’s successor, however, the Civic Party’s defeat in the “five-district referendum” and Eu Yuet-mee’s health problems rendered the United States somewhat skeptical. American consular officials were deeply concerned about candidates of the future spiritual leader of the “Pan-democrats,” lamenting that if “the King is dead, where could the Queen be?”

2. Supporting Hong Kong’s “democratization”: US officials openly receiving “Pan-democracy” activists in Hong Kong

Before 2007, official meetings between American officials and the activists of Hong Kong’s “Pan-democracy camp” were mainly held in the United States. For example, Lee Chu-ming was received by US leaders in all of his visits to America. Since 2007, however, such meetings have been occurring mainly in Hong Kong.

Key members of the “Pan-democracy camp” kept in close contact with American consular officials, hoping to obtain American support. In her meeting with American consul-general Joseph R. Donovan Jr. in January 2009, Anson Chan noted that to contend against the “national education proposal” advocated by Chief Executive Tsang Yam-kuen and Secretary for Home Affairs Tsang Tak-sing, she hoped to go on a speaking tour in Hong Kong’s middle schools elaborating on the policy of “two systems” in opposition to the official educational focus on “one-country.” In another meeting in July 2009, Anson Chan also “encouraged” the United States to constantly remind the Beijing government of America’s concern over Hong Kong’s affairs, as he believed that Beijing would value the US’s opinion greatly. To Kun-sun from the Hong Kong Democratic Party once

“warned” the United States that the Democratic Party had been successfully penetrated by the Chinese central government and was in grave danger. He informed the US Consulate General that Washington should follow the latest development of the Democratic Party so that it could prevent Beijing from infiltrating the Party. Lee Chu-ming even frankly stated that it was a special focus of Hong Kong for its “Pan-democracy camp” to keep contacts with Western consular officials.

As a gesture showing America’s attention to and support of Hong Kong’s “Pan-democracy camp,” US consul-general Stephen M. Young spoke at the American Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong on May 20, 2011, specifically refuting the notion that “it is improper for the United States to firmly support Hong Kong’s democratic progress” while stipulating the US’s positive attitude towards Hong Kong’s democratization. During his visit to Hong Kong on June 1, 2011, US Deputy Secretary of State James Steinberg openly noted that America was pleased to witness and support Hong Kong people’s rights in pursuing democracy. Steinberg also talked with Lee Chu-ming, the former representative of the “Pan-democracy camp.” In July 2011, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton visited Hong Kong, a rare and unusual trip for the Secretary of State, and she met with members of the Hong Kong Legislative Council. In order to avoid criticism from Beijing, the United States took a “balanced” strategy towards the “Pan-democrats” and the “Pro-Establishment camp”, inviting not only Ho Chun-yan of the Democratic Party and Eu Yuet-mee of the Civic Party but also Lee Wai-king from the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong (DAB) and Cheung Yu-yan from the Liberal Party. Secretary Clinton’s meeting with the “pan-democrats” in Hong Kong catered to their demands while placing further social pressures on Hong Kong.

3. US influences penetrating Hong Kong society

Hong Kong has a history of being colonized, suffering under British rule for over one hundred years. By the latter half of the 20th century, Hong Kong had become an ideal place for the West to engage in espionage against China. Later on, with the rapid growth of Western NGOs and the rise of civil societies, Hong Kong turned into an activity place for Western NGOs. American-based NGOs active in Hong Kong mainly include the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, the Freedom House, and the American Center for International Labor Solidarity, etc. These organizations engage in diverse activities in Hong Kong and have been funded by the National Endowment for Democracy. Money channeled to Hong Kong has primarily been used to carry out projects by the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, the Hong Kong Human Rights Monitor, and the American Center for International Labor Solidarity and Civic Exchange.

<i>Year</i>	<i>NGOs</i>	<i>Funds Obtained Annual by NGOs (Dollar)</i>	<i>Annual Total Funds (Dollar)</i>
2007	American Center for International Labor Solidarity	135,000	369,983
	Civic Exchange	64,983	
	Hong Kong Human Rights Monitor	170,000	
2008	American Center for International Labor Solidarity	125,456	355,423
	Civic Exchange	59,967	
	Hong Kong Human Rights Monitor	170,000	
2009	American Center for International Labor Solidarity	130,860	573,000
	National Democratic Institute for International Affairs	272,140	
	Hong Kong Human Rights Monitor	170,000	

Note: Statistics in the table are from the National Endowment for Democracy

The United States attached great importance to the presence of American NGOs functioning in Hong Kong before 2007. Two new developments have taken place since 2007. First, American NGOs have expanded their cooperative partners in Hong Kong to include not only political factions but also higher education entities. For example, the traditional partners of the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs were Civic Exchange founded by Christine Loh from the “Pan-democracy camp” and Synergy Net founded by Cheung Bing-leung, the former chairman of the Democratic Party. However, the Institute has enhanced its coordination with Hong Kong universities in the past several years. In January 2010, it co-held a conference with the University of Hong Kong, discussing the future development of Hong Kong’s political structure. The Hong Kong-America Center originally focused on providing educational services, but it has now started cooperating with the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs as well. Hong Kong City University has also become a cooperative partner of the Institute. All these developments indicate that American NGOs, not satisfied with cooperating only with Hong Kong’s political forces, have started paying much attention to the significance of educational entities within Hong Kong’s political development.

The second new development is that targets of American NGOs’ activities have been gradually extended to include young people, women and labor, with an emphasis on youth. Traditionally, US NGOs primarily targeted Hong Kong’s political factions, especially the “Pan-democrats.” In September 2009, the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs held a university student summit in which young participants from all over Hong Kong discussed Hong Kong’s political development. The student summit was held again in November 2008 by the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs,

with young delegations from eight universities participating and talking over Hong Kong's prominent politics and global issues. The Institute conducted a university student climate conference in December 2009 while organizing a Model LegCo debate in February 2010. Since 2007, the same institute has

also started cooperating with the Women's Political Participation Network in Hong Kong, encouraging women to take part in political activities and making sure that women's concerns get proper social attention. The American Center for International Labor Solidarity also

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engages in various activities in Hong Kong, with the aim of playing a role in safeguarding labor rights.

Based on the analyses done above, it is clear that America's involvement in Hong Kong displays three of the following features. First, a three-level hierarchical structure has been formed in Washington to deal with Hong Kong issues, comprising the Secretary of State, consular officials stationed in Hong Kong, and NGOs. Americans at all three levels cooperate closely based on division of labor. Second, there has been a combination of behind-the-scenes activities and public endorsements in terms of US strategies. Officials like the Secretary of State mainly express their support of Hong Kong's democracy openly while the American Consulate-General works quietly behind the scenes and NGOs infiltrate into the Hong Kong society. Third, the headquarters of US actions on the issue has been relocated from the United States to Hong Kong. The top-ranking US officials have reduced public pressure on the Chinese government while

increasing their contacts with the “pan-democrats” in Hong Kong.

II. Reasons Why the United States Has Changed Its Strategy of Interference

1. The NPC’s interpretation of the “Basic Law” and the decline of American power

Before 1997, the United States always denounced the Chinese central government for “blocking” Hong Kong’s democratic progress. By the end of 2007, the NPC interpreted the “Basic Law,” making it clear that Hong Kong would elect its Chief Executive based on universal suffrage by 2017 and conduct direct elections of the LegCo by 2020. Reflecting the Chinese principle of promoting Hong Kong’s democratization in a sequential manner, this measure was the best indicator of Hong Kong’s political development as well as the substantial effort made by the Chinese government in advancing a democratic Hong Kong. Although the US government has always urged the opposition camp in Hong Kong to advance the schedule to an earlier date, it has no sufficient excuse for boycotting the Chinese schedule.

Meanwhile, both the sub-prime mortgage crisis in 2007 and the financial crisis in 2008 have weakened the US’s international relations power while China’s international prominence has become even more obvious. America finds it more difficult to provide international public goods single-handedly, and it has even started advocating a “G2” proposal – China and the United States cooperating in global governance. New developments also demand more US-China coordination on various global issues, such as peacemaking on the Korean Peninsula, anti-terrorism, climate change, and the global financial crises. Meanwhile, military exchanges between the two have been on the rise in

recent times, demonstrating that the Sino-US relationship has been ushered into a new era of multi-level and complex interdependence. All these factors have restrained US decision-makers from pressuring China on the issue of Hong Kong.

2. Safeguarding Western value systems in Hong Kong

There are over 60,000 American citizens living in Hong Kong. Hong Kong practices capitalism although its sovereignty has been transferred to socialist China for over a decade. The United States is striving to maintain Western values and interests in Hong Kong. In addition, Washington is attempting to extend Western ideas such as freedom and democracy to the Chinese mainland via Hong Kong through increased Hong Kong-mainland exchanges since its handover. If Hong Kong were to be democratized, it would become another model of Western democracy for the Chinese mainland and even the whole East Asia. Moreover, inspired by the “Jasmine Revolution” that took place in the Middle East and North Africa, the United States hopes Hong Kong could propel such a “Jasmine Revolution” in the Chinese mainland. During the third round of the US-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue held in May 2011, both American Vice President Joe Biden and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton voiced discontent about China’s human rights practices. On May 20th 2011, President Obama made a speech supporting the “Jasmine Revolution”; on the same day, when speaking before the American Chamber of Commerce, American consul-general in Hong Kong Stephen M. Young also expressed “deep concern” over China’s human rights situation.

Since 2007, the United States has been eager to integrate the leading figures of the “Pan-democracy camp” into the Hong Kong political scene, mainly because Hong Kong will face multiple key elections in the coming years: the elections of the Chief Executive and the LegCo in 2012 as well as the LegCo elections in 2016. These three elections will be the center of competition

for all political factions in Hong Kong and the testing grounds for the general election of the Chief Executive in 2017 and the direct election of the LegCo in 2020. Since the “Pan-democracy camp” didn’t do well in the 2008 LegCo election, it must promote unity among its leaders in order to succeed in the 2012 election. Meanwhile, the United States had been pressing the “Pan-democracy camp” to abolish the functional constituencies in the LegCo elections. Now Washington’s purpose is clear: it wants to foster a strong “opposition camp” in Hong Kong to promote party governance and ultimately establish an American-style democracy featured by “separation of powers.”

3. America’s exploitation of Hong Kong’s “double identity”

Hong Kong residents have multiple individual and political identities, providing the United States with an opportunity to exploit them. According to a survey published by Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies in 1985, 60.8% of Hong Kong citizens identify with Chinese culture while another 78.6% felt proud of being a Chinese. Another analysis in 1994 demonstrated that over 90% of the Hong Kong public respected traditional Chinese moral values. As it was shown in a study by Dr. Wong Ka-ying from the Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies at the Hong Kong Chinese University, over 57% of Hong Kong residents identify themselves as “Hongkongnese,” 30% as “Chinese,” and 10% as both Chinese and Hongkongnese during the first year of sovereignty return after 1997.

The formation of “Hongkongnese” identity among Hong Kong residents can be traced to the following origins. First, after the founding of the People’s Republic by the Chinese Communist Party in 1949, traffic was closed across the border and communication between socialist China and Hong Kong under the British rule was shut-off due to the ongoing East-West confrontation. Second, Hong Kong gradually became a part of the capitalist political and economic system while the

Chinese mainland leaned to the socialist side during the Cold War era. The capitalist camp was in the superior position in its competition with the socialist camp then. Third, the living standard of Hong Kong citizens increased faster than that of the mainland inhabitants, making it easier for the West to propagate capitalist superiority. All above-mentioned reasons facilitated the formation of the “Hongkongnese” identity between 1949 and 1997. Essentially, the identity of “Hongkongnese” demonstrates

people’s acceptance of Western capitalist political and economic systems.

The United States attaches great importance to Hong Kong’s younger generation since it hopes to take advantage of their

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weakened identification with the Chinese mainland. When surveying Hong Kong residents’ identity between 1990 and 2001, Zheng Wantai and Wong Siu-lun from the University of Hong Kong discovered that 35% of Hong Kong citizens born before 1945 identified as “Hongkongnese” in 2001 while 43.3% identified as “Chinese.” Meanwhile, for those born after 1970, over 57% called themselves “Hong Kong citizens” while the percentage that identified as “Chinese” was only 24.8%. As a sovereign state, China has been attempting to strengthen Hong Kong citizens’ national identification. After Hong Kong’s return, its communication with the mainland has increased greatly and schools in Hong Kong have gradually strengthened their national education. Meanwhile, the Chinese government has reiterated its policy of gradually advancing democracy in Hong Kong. However, cultivating Chinese identity among young people cannot be accomplished overnight, and this leaves plenty of room for US interference. America seeks to enlarge the

social basis of American values by utilizing Hong Kong citizens' "Hongkongnese" identity.

4. The "binary structure" of Hong Kong politics also provides the necessary condition for US interference

The British government never introduced Western democracy to Hong Kong before the 1980s, when it started promoting Hong Kong's "democratization" mainly through increasing the number of elected members in the LegCo. Since then, pro-democratic forces have been rising rapidly in Hong Kong. After the signing of the "Sino-British Joint Declaration," various social groups have been debating the future evolution of Hong Kong's political structure. In 1986, many social and pressure groups issued statements supporting the general election of Hong Kong's Chief Executive and the direct election of at least half of the LegCo seats by 1997. Eleven civil organizations formed the Joint Committee on the Promotion of Democratic Government (JCPDG) on October 27, 1986, with Szeto Wah and Lee Chu-ming as leaders, both of whom were then members of the Drafting Committee for the "Basic Law." In May 1989, the Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements in China (the Alliance) was founded. The first direct election of the LegCo was held in 1991 while Hong Kong's first political party – the United Democrats of Hong Kong – was established under the leadership of Lee Chu-ming and Szeto Wah. The United Democrats of Hong Kong and the Meeting Point merged into the Democratic Party in 1994. The "Pan-Democracy Camp" took shape with the founding of the Civic Party, the League of Social Democrats, and other parties after 1997.

In opposition to the "Pan-democrats," some patriots in Hong Kong founded the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment of Hong Kong (DAB). In 1995, the DAB participated in the LegCo election for the first time but did not fare particularly well. After Hong Kong's handover to China, the electoral rules of the

LegCo were reformed with the abolishment of the “Chris Patten Plan” and the adoption of functional constituencies. For the direct election of District Councils, the system of proportional representation was adopted. After years of effort, the DAB became the majority party in the LegCo elections since Hong Kong’s return. The DAB allied with the Hong Kong Progressive Alliance (HKPA) in February 2005, renaming itself as the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong, although DAB remains its abbreviation.

The binary feature of Hong Kong citizens’ political identification has always been reflected in power politics. Hong Kong essentially has the same identification with the traditional Chinese culture as the Mainland, although it is perceived as a member of the capitalist world by Western powers. America is seeking to build a genuine and thorough democracy in Hong Kong at a fast pace. Under such circumstances, political factions in Hong Kong are also divided into two major camps: the pro-establishment forces such as the DAB endorse Hong Kong’s gradual democratization while the “Pan-democracy camp” supports policies of Western powers.

III. Tendency of American Interference in Hong Kong Affairs

1. Continuing support for the unity of the “Pan-democracy camp”

There are diverse factions inside the “Pan-democracy camp.” Although they pursue the same goal of advancing Hong Kong’s democratization, they take different measures and follow different guidelines. Before 2008, Lee Chu-ming was widely perceived as the key leader of the Pan -democrats. He was received many times by American officials and has received support from the US government. After Lee’s retirement, Washington once

considered supporting Eu Yuet-mee as the new leader, but it had to give up the plan due to the Pan-democracy camp's failure in the "de facto five-district referendum" and Eu's health problem. In 2010, the Chinese central government and the government of the HKSAR accepted a revised proposal put forward by the Democratic Party on the 2012 Constitutional Reform Package, demonstrating the Democratic Party's policy change to a more "moderate" side. This triggered another major split among the "Pan-democrats." Right now, the "Pan-democracy camp" is divided into three sections: the radical faction represented by the League of Social Democrats and the Young Social Activists, the more centrist section represented by the Civic Party, and the moderate section represented by the Democratic Party, and the Hong Kong Association for Democracy and People's Livelihood (ADPL). In the future, the US government may continue facilitating the unity of the "Pan-democrats" to contend against the "Pro-Establishment camp."

2. Enlarging the social basis of American values in Hong Kong

Hong Kong has a full-blown civil society and there are a large number of NGOs operating there, making it difficult to specify any America-based NGOs. Moreover, since the "Hong Kong Basic Law Article 23" has not been passed as legislation, it is hard to punish foreign NGOs for engaging in illegal activities. Article 23 stipulates that "the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) shall enact laws on its own to prohibit any act of treason, secession, sedition, subversion against the Central People's Government, or theft of state secrets, to prohibit foreign political organizations or bodies from conducting political activities in the Region, and to prohibit political organizations or bodies of the Region from establishing ties with foreign political organizations or bodies." Although similar legislation was passed in Macao Special Administrative Region in 2009,

the United States should take further steps to prevent Article 23 from becoming a law and carry out activities making use of this legal vacuum. Moreover, the “double identity” of Hong Kong citizens as well as the “binary structure” of Hong Kong politics will likely remain unchanged in the near future, as the US government will continue enlarging the social basis for Hong Kong people’s identification with American values.

3. Preventing Hong Kong from becoming a stage for US-China wrestling

Even at the onset of the Cold War, the United States was aware of Hong Kong’s frontier position in containing China. When speaking to the US Senate in June 1951, Dean Acheson stated “I believe should Hong Kong fell into the hands of the Chinese Communist Party, it would bring negative effects on the interests of the United Nations and our interests.” As a result, since the 1950s the United States used Hong Kong a crucial port for enforcing a trade embargo against the Chinese mainland and all goods shipped to Hong Kong were subject to strict inspection. Other than this, the CIA also found Hong Kong an ideal place to conduct espionage against China. The CIA gathered newspapers and documents published in Chinese mainland while acquiring information about mainlanders coming to Hong Kong in order to analyze and predict political developments in China.

From 1989 until Hong Kong’s transfer in 1997, the US’s concern over Hong Kong shifted over three major areas: political development, human rights, and high-degree autonomy. Washington once tried to intervene in a high-profile manner, exerting pressure on the Chinese government. Its strategies have changed in the past few years although the three focuses remained the same. Hong Kong is a diversified society where Chinese and foreigners coexist and different schools of thought interact. The Chinese Central Government has worked out a

schedule for Hong Kong's future as a democracy, but there are still plenty of disputes amongst Hong Kong residents on how exactly to realize democracy. These disputes range over topics like whether or not to abolish functional constituencies and the nomination procedure for Chief Executive candidates. The 2012 election of the Chief Executive and the LegCo

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will be held soon while the 2017 Chief Executive election based on universal suffrage and the 2020 direct election of LegCo are not so far off. All will trigger controversy in the coming years. China will be vigilant against the United States if Washington seeks to deepen its interference in Hong Kong. In September 2011, WikiLeaks disclosed information about US consular officials' intervention in Hong Kong affairs, arousing strong criticism against the United States by the Chinese government, but Washington has denied any such behaviors. If the United States continues its interference in the future, Sino-US conflicts over Hong Kong will be more intense and Hong Kong will become the political wrestling place for Washington and Beijing. This will be harmful to Hong Kong.

IV. Effects of US Interference in Hong Kong Affairs

US intervention in Hong Kong violates international laws and damages China's interests in Hong Kong. America involves itself in Hong Kong's internal affairs through its Consulate-General and by infiltrating into the local society while cultivating pro-Western political factions there. The United States also attempts to promote "democracy" and "human rights" by enhancing

NGOs' operations in Hong Kong. All these are in violation of the "Vienna Convention on Consular Relations" which stipulates that consular officials shall not interfere in the domestic affairs of the receiving state.

American interference in Hong Kong's affairs is detrimental to the implementation of the "one country two systems" policy. In the past years, there have been voices in Hong Kong and the United States denouncing China for "interfering" in Hong Kong's "high-level autonomy," and seeking to split "two systems" from "one country." According to the information provided by WikiLeaks, the major icon of the "Pan-democracy camp," Anson Chan, even proposed that the US consul general actively publicize "two systems" in opposition to the "one country" focus stressed by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region government. Meanwhile, some from the "Pan-democracy camp" have voiced their challenges against the central government regarding the 2012 Chief Executive election. For example, in an article published in the "Sing Tao Daily," the former vice chairman of the Civic Party, Cheung Chiu-hung, stated that "facing the invasion of unhealthy factors from the mainland and the extended control on Hong Kong by the Central government, we really need a Chief Executive who knows how to say 'no.'" The "Pan-Democrats" have also expressed similar ideas to US consular officials and have received endorsement from the latter. In fact, the policy of "one country two systems" was clearly defined even during the Sino-UK negotiations on Hong Kong's return. "Two systems" means "two systems" under the "one country" condition and Hong Kong will enjoy "high-level autonomy" instead of "complete autonomy."

US interference in Hong Kong's affairs is not helpful in ameliorating the differences among various political factions. Democratic elections were gradually introduced to Hong Kong before its handover and electoral systems were not fully

established within such a short period of time. The United States has offered training on the technical details of elections through NGOs, a process which can help improve election quality. The US's training of young people in Hong Kong is also conducive to the growth of next-generation political leaders there. Meanwhile, America's concerns over women and labor issues help these disadvantaged groups to express their grievances and demands. The US's cooperation with universities in Hong Kong helps them engage in social service provision. All the above-mentioned activities reflect the positive aspects of the US's involvement in Hong Kong. However, US activities are deeply entwined with and affected by political interests, making it difficult to settle differences among Hong Kong's rival political factions. The major divergence between the Pro-Establishment camp and Pan-Democracy camp lies in the following areas. Regarding Hong Kong's political structure, the Pro-Establishment side accepts the model of "executive domination" while the Pan-democrats desire the Western-style "checks and balances" system. With respect to the relations between the central and local governments, Pro-Establishment factions believe Hong Kong's "high-level autonomy" has been effectively guaranteed and implemented while the latter insists that "high-degree autonomy" has not been achieved and that "two systems" should be separated from "one country." Concerning the practice of functional constituencies, the Pro-Establishment camp acknowledges its positive effect and supports its continuance while the "Pan-democrats" oppose it. The conceptual divergences and conflicts have restricted Hong Kong's political development. 