

Hong Kong

The Chinese authorities attempted to introduce a right of appeal of Hong Kong court cases to the mainland, seeking to put HK law more firmly under China's control. This deeply unpopular move sparked many protests in Hong Kong and led to running fights between the police and the protesters. A hapless Chief Executive tried to persuade a split legislature that this was an benign and sensible move, without success.

Grasping the opportunity of the Covid 19 preoccupations of the rest of the world, China has now moved to legislate her supremacy in Beijing, bypassing the Hong Kong legislature. The new law will allow either the Hong Kong police or Chinese officials to determine if someone's democratic protest amounts to treason or sedition. Wanting independence is banned.

Mr Trump has responded strongly to this development. Each year by law the President has to confirm that Hong Kong is still sufficiently independent of China to qualify for the continuing special trade deal it enjoys with the USA. He says he is not willing to do so, given the new incursions on Hong Kong independence. This will mean Hong Kong business will face the same tariffs, bans and penalties as trade from mainland China to the USA does.

The UK is the co signatory of the Treaty with China to establish Hong Kong as part of China under the one country two systems mantle. The two systems were meant to encompass the right of Hong Kong to settle many of its own matters and court cases in return for maintained access and privileges to western markets. What action should the UK take to seek to uphold this Treaty? Is it right to offer UK residence to Hong Kong citizens?

The famous clauses 18 and 19 which provide for Hong Kong judicial and law making independence do also contain a provision allowing the imposition of Chinese national laws when there is a break down in government in Hong Kong.