CHAPTER 7

Two Final Battles, District Elections, United States and Taiwan

This chapter examines the two final and critical battles in the anti-extradition, anti-police and anti-mainlandization protests, namely the battles at the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) and the Polytechnic University of Hong Kong (PolyU). These two battles marked the final stage of a showdown between protesters and police. The confrontations at the PolyU led to the defeat of many radical protesters, who were arrested, surrendered to the police or escaped. After the battle at the PolyU, the protest movement downsized although it has been lingering on since early 2020. The outbreak of Covid-19 in China in February 2020 and then in Hong Kong from late February onward have become the dampers temporarily minimizing the quantity of protests. The whole protest movement became more moderate than ever before when District Council elections were held on November 25, when the democrats won many of the directly elected seats. The elections were functional as they provided safety-valves for the disgruntled citizens to vent their anger through the exercise of their ballots. On the other hand, the US Congress passed the US Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act, which was then signed into law by President Trump. The combined impacts of pan-democratic electoral victory, the onset of Covid-19 and the US Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act alleviated the tense political atmosphere in the HKSAR, diverting the attention of protesters to electoral politics, the combat against infectious disease and the expectation of
a more assertive US policy toward the HKSAR. Finally, the role of the Republic of China (ROC) on Taiwan in the Hong Kong protests will be examined.

The Battle of CUHK

The most important trigger of the battle of the CUHK could be traced back to the mysterious death of Alex Chow Tsz-lok, a 22-year-old student at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST), on November 8. Chow fell down from a car park in Cheung Kwan O on the night of November 4, when the police chased the protesters with the use of tear gas in the district. It was unclear how Chow died. He appeared to suffer a severe brain injury after falling from the car park. The HKUST president, Wei Shyy, said that he would condemn police violence if officers were found to violate the guideline of firing tear gas.² Chow’s death raised the students’ memory of the mysterious death of another 15-year-old female student named Chan Yin-lam, who disappeared on September 19 and who was found dead on September 22. An autopsy in early November found Chan’s death as non-suspicious and she appeared to commit suicide.² Still, some netizens accused the police of being implicated in the death of Chan and Chow. Due to all the unverifiable messages circulated in social media, many young protesters were determined to confront the police, believing that the police had “abused their power.”

The battle at the CUHK took place from November 11 to 12 (Table 7.1). The battle stemmed from the entry of the police into the CUHK campus, firing tear gas canisters and rubber bullets at the protesters, who were then determined to battle the police and attempted to occupy the strategic position of Number 2 bridge, which cut across the Tolo Highway. The battle became fierce on the second day, November 12, when students and protesters vowed to defend the CUHK with the logistical support from outsiders. On the other hand, the CUHK Vice-Chancellor Rocky Tuan tried to mediate between police and protesters,
Table 7.1  The battle of the Chinese University of Hong Kong, November 11–15, 2019

| Time       | Event                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| November 7 | A graduation ceremony was held at the CUHK where graduates showed up in masks and they were against the anti-mask law. They raised a banner with words “Heaven will eliminate the CCP.” Other banners showed the words “Liberate Hong Kong, revolution of our times” and “we are not afraid of guns and bullets but defend the truths.”                                                                                     |
| November 11| On the morning, a call for general strike was supported by most local universities. The police entered the CUHK campus from Number 2 bridge. A tear gas canister was fired to the path along the Chung Chi College. On the bridge, a door panel was used by protesters to protect themselves from the tear gas and rubber bullets from the police. Yet, under the barrage of tear gas, the protesters’ umbrellas and goggles could not protect themselves. On the wall of a tunnel leading to CUHK, protesters painted the words “retreat is no longer our option.” They mobilized the use of umbrellas, swimming boards, gas masks and helmets for their protection. Some protesters attempted to extinguish the tear gas canisters fired by police. Some went to the front line to confront police. Protesters used anything they had to cover themselves, including garbage bins, tables, chairs and football goalposts. Police eventually went into the campus and fired tear gas and pepper pellets, arresting several protesters. Some reporters were injured. LegCo member Roy Kwong arrived at CUHK and tried to negotiate between protesters and police. |
| November 12| After a prolonged confrontation between protesters and police, serious clashes broke out at 3:30 pm. Police again entered the campus to arrest some protesters. A car and other objects were set fire. More protesters arrived at the scene to support those who defended the CUHK. Inside a tunnel at CUHK, protesters wrote that on July 21, white shirts committed terror; that on August 31, the Prince Edward MTR station was closed for 48 hours and “any possible dead might be hidden”; and that on October 1, a boy’s heart was almost shot by a police officer. These words showed the anger and hatred of protesters toward the police. Other words in the tunnel included “we were painfully tortured and how can you ignore this?” The words reminded students and protesters of the San Uk Ling Holding Center in which a CUHK student claimed to be “harassed” by the police. The CUHK Vice-Chancellor Rocky Sung-chi Tuan eventually intervened as a middleman between protesters and police. After he discussed with the police, Tuan gave a briefing to protesters who demanded the unconditional release of four protesters. Accompanied by the students, Tuan went to the police for further discussion, but on his way he and protesters were hit by tear gas. Police used Number 2 bridge as a front-line to fire tear gas, bean bag rounds and rubber bullets at protesters, who in turn threw bricks, debris and Molotov cocktails. Some protesters used bows and arrows to light up roadblocks. At night, former CUHK Vice-Chancellor Joseph Jao-yiu Sung arrived at the campus to rescue those injured protesters and students. Many citizens went to the CUHK to provide logistical supplies to students. Some drove to the CUHK and blocked the police reinforcement to take over Number 2 bridge, causing traffic jam at the Tolo Harbor. |
| Time   | Event                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|--------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| November 13 | Protesters went to occupy Number 2 bridge and set up the roadblocks at the university entrance and in front of the Chung Chi College gate. A board with the words “Heaven will eliminate the CCP” was placed on the front line. |
| November 14 | Protesters set up barricades on the Tolo Highway, blocking traffic. They built up their stronghold on the bridge, asking the government to respond to the protesters’ five demands. They also set up entry point to the bridge which was strategic in their defense of CUHK. |
| November 15 | Three protesters at CUHK held a press conference and said that, in view of the upcoming District Council election, protesters opened one lane in each direction on the Tolo Highway for 24 hours to reduce traffic disruption. This gesture was made in good faith and protesters demanded that the government should release the arrested people and establish an independent commission of inquiry in 24 hours. Chief Secretary Matthew Cheung rejected their demands. On the other hand, the CUHK Student Union said none of its members participated in the press conference, showing a rift within protesters. Traffic resumed on the Tolo Highway. At night, protesters began to leave the CUHK as there were internal divisions. Some contended that the flexible strategy of “be water” meant that protesters should change tactics rather than just occupying the CUHK. |

Source: *Free HK: Liberate Hong Kong, Revolution of Our Time* (Hong Kong: Epoch Times, December 24, 2019), pp. 6-31. Also see “CUHK Student Union: Have not heard and agree with the front-line protesters’ action and demands,” Radio Television Hong Kong, November 15, 2019, in https://news.rthk.hk/rthk/ch/component/k2/1492304-20191115.htm?archive_date=2019-11-15, access date: April 6, 2020
but he was hit by tear gas. The protesters later occupied the bridge and set up roadblock that paralyzed the traffic on the Tolo Highway until November 15, when protesters were divided into softliners and hardliners. Softliners decided to retreat from the bridge on good faith and opened a lane on each side of the Tolo Highway, while hardliners from the Student Union denied that this move gained their support. The battle at the CUHK stopped, but another much fierce battle would be waged at the PolyU.

**The Battle of Polytechnic University of Hong Kong: A Bridge Too Far**

The confrontations between protesters and police at the PolyU began from November 13 to 15, when students and protesters constructed barricades inside and outside the campus. Originally, protests and police had skirmishes, but on November 17 protesters were determined to defend the PolyU campus—a strategic error that led to many arrests at the end of the battle on November 19 and 20. Table 7.2 delineates the developments of the entire battle of the PolyU. On the afternoon and night of November 17, police began to surround PolyU, besieging the protesters who would find it very difficult to escape on the following days. The strategic errors made by protesters were twofold. First, unlike the CUHK campus where flat land, physical spaces and steep hillside could provide CUHK protesters more escape routes and better logistical supplies, the PolyU campus could be surrounded by police much more easily, especially when protesters themselves blocked their own exits and entrances on November 16. Second, the intuitive instinct of some protesters to defend a site like PolyU assertively ran against the tactic of “be water,” adopting a rigidly defensive approach contrary to a flexible tactic that characterized the protesters on July 1 and October 1. Hence, when some protesters said on November 18 that logistical supplies were inadequate, they made the strategic error of committing to defend PolyU while abandoning the usual tactic of maintaining flexibility. This strategic error was attributed to two factors. First, the idea of “be water” remained a slogan in the entire protests but it left to protesters themselves to interpret and implement the strategy. The room for interpretation and implementation at the battle of PolyU was shaped much by the earlier clashes between protesters and police at the CUHK. The final withdrawal of protesters at CUHK was due to an
Table 7.2  The battle of the Polytechnic University of Hong Kong

| Time       | Event                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| November 13–15 | Writings and posters were seen on the campus and filled with slogans of the resistance movement. Protesters began standing on the road outside the university, decorated with small items to form roadblocks. They formed a defense line with umbrellas, while building a brick wall to keep out police intrusion. Day and night without rest, protesters were tired and slept by the roadside. |
| November 16 | There were protesters staying inside the university, whereas barricades were set up along the Hunghom Cross-Harbor tunnel. Protesters practiced self-defense and set up barricades at the main entrance to keep the police out. A night, the police fired tear gas canisters at protesters, who then set up a line of fire to prevent them from passing through the roadblocks. By 1 am the police suddenly withdrew and built up a front line at the junction of Austin Road and Austin Avenue. Protesters retreated to the campus, blocking the entrance and exit, and setting up defensive lines made up of umbrellas. The move of protesters indicated that they adopted a defensive posture at PolyU. |
| November 17 | Violent clashes broke out. Police deployed water cannons and armor vehicles. Protesters retaliated with bricks and petrol bombs. Later, police fired numerous rounds of tear gas, rubber bullets and sponge grenades. Protesters used umbrellas for their protection. The police’s special tactical squad fired tear gas from an armor truck. Protesters built up barricades on the top of a bridge to prevent the police from advancing further into the campus. At the same time, colorless and blue liquids containing nerve agents were sprayed by the police water cannon vehicles. Protesters said that “we will remember the days we go through together, shoulder to shoulder.” The protesters on the bridge defended PolyU campus against the attack from water cannons and tear gas canisters. Some of them shouted, “Force is with you” and “Heaven will eliminate the CCP.” Around 3 am, the police posted a statement on the Facebook, requesting all protesters in the campus to leave through the Lee Shau Kee Building (Y Core), and asking protesters to abide by their instructions. However, many who followed the instruction were arrested, including medical professionals and first-aiders who wore reflective vests. Their hands were tied together at the back by the police. A surgeon wrote to *Lancet*, saying that Hong Kong was in a “humanitarian” crisis, and criticized the way in which the police handled the situation. At 5:56 pm, the police issued a statement saying that a mob had confronted them near the PolyU in the past hour. At Chatham Road South, some protesters set up roadblocks on the Cheong Wan Road to prevent police from advancing. The protesters threw dozens of petrol bombs at the police, who warned those who supported protesters of participating in a “riot.” The police deployed two water cannon vehicles and a long-range acoustic device, but later two armor vehicles were hit by Molotov cocktails. PolyU was heavily besieged. Smoke could be seen throughout the campus where protesters had little protective gears and had to run away from tear gas. Some got injured and required swift medical attention from first-aiders. At 9:22 pm, police fired three tear gas canisters to the Cheong Wan Road flyover. At 9:30 pm, to ensure personal safety, the police again urged everyone on campus to immediately use the exit of Li Shau-Kee Building (Block Y) and follow police instructions. The police planned further operations to surround die-hard protesters in the campus. At 11:54 pm, the water cannon vehicle fired blue water cannons at the Cheong Wan Road demonstrators, who threw multiple petrol bombs. |
November 18  

Many protesters felt exhausted after being sprayed by the blue liquid from water cannon vehicles. A volunteer chef said that students put up with the pain they suffered from the blue spray and slept with their shoes and socks on in case the police would break into the campus. A message in the hallway said: “Brothers: Sorry for all the troubles brought to you as a result of inadequate provisions here at the campus.” Some besieged protesters tried to break through to get out of the campus but were met with tear gas used by police. Many were arrested. Some were climbing over a fence to try to break through the police siege. But the police fired tear gas and rubber bullets at those trying to break through while protesters provided cover for each other. In the abortive breakthrough, the police arrested many protesters. At 3:34 pm, five to six parents said that their children were inside PolyU. They asked the police to let them go inside the campus to see their children. A mother knelt down to the police and wept bitterly, saying “If my daughter dies, I jump off the building.” Another parent wanted to see the police commander and said that the police could arrest his children. At 4:25 pm, a zone at PolyU, namely D Core, saw explosions. At 5:05 pm, in response to PolyU’s situation, the PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that there were some extremely “violent criminals” on the campus, and it strongly supported police to enforce law and order. At 6:15 pm, demonstrators inside PolyU held meetings to discuss their action. A 14-year-old suggested a determined retreat. Protesters started to blame and scold each other, while some appealed to them for a calm attitude. At 6:23 pm, legislator Yip Kin-yun said on his Facebook that dozens of secondary school principals were heading to PolyU to support their students. There were about 100 middle-school students inside the PolyU. Red Cross officers started going into the campus and took care of 40 injured protesters. At 7 pm, some staff members from secondary schools were hindered from entering the campus to assist the students. Many parents and teachers were worried and hoped that the police could allow principals and teachers to enter the campus to be mediators, and to accompany students to leave.  

Many civilians made attempts to go into PolyU, hoping to divert the attention of police who surrounded protesters at PolyU. At 8:40 pm, hundreds of people walked out of the Salisbury Road in Tsimshatsui toward the Centennial Park and shouted, “Going to PolyU to rescue students.” They proceeded to PolyU, but the police set up defensive lines at the Science Museum Road and Salisbury Road and fired tear gas. Many supporters came from Jordan, Taumatei, Tsimshatsui East and Hunghom. At the Chinachem Golden Plaza near PolyU, hundreds of new protesters were caught, searched and arrested by the police. From Jordan to Tsimshatsui, police continued to fire tear gas canisters to disperse protesters on the Nathan Road. At 9:45 pm, more than 100 protesters at the PolyU jumped off from a footbridge at Core Z and escaped onto the Chatham Road’s northbound flyover to the direction of Hunghom. Once the mass media reported their escape, the police arrived and fired tear gas canisters at the footbridge. Protesters ran for cover; some retaliated by using bows and arrows. Some of them were picked up by motorbikes on the footbridge and escaped. But some were arrested.

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At the same time, Ip Kin-yuen, a LegCo member, met the media along with 20 secondary school principals, expressing their wish to take students safely out of PolyU. Six religious leaders appealed to all sides to stop fighting to allow protesters and the injured to leave the campus. At 11 pm, the police used tear gas to disperse protesters on the Nathan Road near Pitt Street. Numerous protesters rushed into narrow alleys, causing stampede. The passage between Yaumatei MTR's Exit A1 and Po Ning Building witnessed protesters being piled up to six to eight layers. First-aiders and firemen arrived at the scene to help and rescue protesters, but they were driven away by the police who used pepper spray and batons. Being pulled out from the layers of human bodies, the injured protesters were ordered by the police to kneel on the ground for their arrest.

At 11:24 pm, Ip Kin-yuen said that after his coordination with the police, the principals of middle schools were preparing to enter PolyU. Students under the age of 18 could go to a specific location to find their principals. The police would not arrest them. They could leave the campus for home after police took their pictures and recorded their ID cards information. But the police reserved the right of prosecution. Yet, if protesters were over 18 years old, they would be arrested. The arrested students could be accompanied by their school principals with the assistance of lawyers. The former chairman of LegCo, Jasper Tsang, and lecturer Eric Cheung Tat-ming appeared at the PolyU. Both held discussions with the parents and representatives of young protesters. Tsang and Cheung tried to be the mediators.

November 19

On the morning, many protesters were worrying about police “brutality” and they tried to escape through an underground sewer pipe. About 17 people crawled inside, with 3 turning back for fear of the relatively high water-level, but the rest made it safely outside the tunnel and miraculously escaped. Some unconfirmed reports said that the number of escapees through the tunnel approached 100. Firefighters came to investigate after suspecting that protesters might have been trapped inside the sewer. They searched the tunnel, but no one was found. Those protesters who decided not to take the underground tunnel route gathered to discuss alternative plans.

PolyU Council Chair Lam Tai-fai entered the campus. He hoped that the protesters and students could cherish their life and leave the campus as soon as possible. He hoped that the police would not use force to enter the PolyU campus. Reverend William Devlin, an American priest, visited the campus and prayed for protesters. Some parents of the students who were trapped inside PolyU staged a sit-in on the footbridge near the campus, hoping that their children would leave the campus safely. They expressed discontent with the “riot” charges laid by the police on their children.
At 10 pm, some people who assisted middle-school students to leave said that originally about 150 people were in PolyU, but the number of people who chose to leave on November 18 far exceeded the original estimate, together with adults who left voluntarily. Altogether 300 people left the campus. At 11:30 pm, 100 people who were unwell at PolyU went to the ambulances. Most of them were covered with tin foil to keep themselves warm. Many protesters suffered foot injuries. Some people needed to be taken out by stretcher beds. Police said at a regular press conference that 1100 people had been arrested and registered in PolyU, of which about 600 had left voluntarily, including 400 adults and 200 minors. Most voluntary leavers were not PolyU students.

At 10:21 pm, Police Commissioner Chris Tang was accompanied by a group of police to walk toward the campus and inspected the development. At 11 pm, six demonstrators tried to escape and climb through a barbed wire into the red tunnel area, but they were arrested by police. At 11:41 pm, other protesters stepped out PolyU and were accompanied by adults. The police announced that at 11 pm, a total of 800 people had left the campus and were under investigation.

A protester designed a big SOS sign with towels on the platform in front of the Shaw Amenities building, sending a message to the international society and saying that “people are badly injured, there will be a humanitarian crisis. The situation is critical, please help us immediately!” After four days of siege, over hundred protesters were stranded inside the campus, including students and civilians. But food and gas were running out. The campus looked abandoned with lots of debris and trashes all over the ground. The Chinese word “resist” was sprayed on a big pillar of the campus. Many protesters and students suffered from hypothermia following the multiple bursts of water cannon fired by the police on them a few days ago. These injured protesters waited for ambulances to take them out of the campus. Gradually, protesters either left or escaped.

Source: Free HK: Liberate Hong Kong, Revolution of Our Time (Hong Kong: Epoch Times, December 24, 2019); Ming Pao Daily, November 18, 2019, pp. A01–A05; Apple Daily, November 18, 2019, pp. A01–A05; Ming Pao Daily, November 19, 2019, pp. A01–A08 and November 20, 2019, pp. A01–A04; Apple Daily, November 19, 2019, pp. A01–A03 and November 20, 2019, pp. A01–A05
internal split among them into softliners, who argued for an approach to stick to the principle of “be water,” and hardliners, who included members of the Student Unions adopting a more uncompromising tactic. The PolyU defense was dominated by the more uncompromising and hardline protesters, who failed to anticipate the difficulties of achieving a breakthrough in the final stage of the battle. Hence, the two final battles, one at the CUHK and the other at the PolyU, were punctuated partly by strategic flexibility versus rigidity, and partly by the determination of protesters to have an escalation of violent showdown with police before the upcoming November 24 District Council elections. This increased intensity of violent clashes, however, would lead to the massive arrests of protesters at the PolyU campus, which could be regarded as the battle of Waterloo in the anti-extradition, anti-police and anti-mainlandization movement from June to December 2019.

The PolyU battle initiated by protesters underestimated the determination of the new Police Commissioner Chris Tang. In November 2019, he was appointed as the new commissioner succeeding Stephen Lo. Trained in Pudong’s China Executive Leadership Academy and equipped with a master’s degree in international security and strategy, Tang was determined to win the battle of PolyU once he became the new leader of the police force. As such, the movement of hardline protesters into the defense of PolyU, which was geo-strategically far more easily isolated than the CUHK campus, unintentionally fell into the police trap.

The final stage of the battle at PolyU was characterized by two main events, namely the visit by former LegCo President Jasper Tsang and law lecturer Eric Cheung to the campus on the night of November 18, and the intervention of intermediary groups and individuals to find out the hiding protesters in the campus from November 19 to 26 (Table 7.3). The visits by Tsang, Cheung and lawmaker Ip Kin-yuen signaled the importance of third-party intermediaries to mediate between protesters and police. At the same time, the police made a concession. The protesters could choose to leave the campus voluntarily, but they all had to be registered by the police, who then reserved the right of prosecution. For those protesters aged 18 or above who opted to leave, the police had to arrest them, but they were allowed to be accompanied by principals and

3 For Tang’s training, see “Senior Officers: Hong Kong Police Force,” in https://www.police.gov.hk/PPP_EN/01/about_us/os_sofficers.html, access date: April 10, 2020.
Table 7.3  The last stage of the battle of Polytechnic University, November 20–26

| Date       | Event                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| November 20, 2019 9:15 | Many protesters who stayed at the campus took an American flag, bows and arrows on the morning and walked to the platform at Block A facing Chatham Road South.                                              |
| 13:15     | The Assistant Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong, Joseph Ha Chi-shing, went to PolyU to accompany a young man to leave PolyU. Ha talked to 7–8 people in the campus.                                  |
| 14:19     | Eric Cheung Tat-ming, a lecturer of the School of Law at the University of Hong Kong, said on Facebook that more than 600 people stranded at PolyU had left safely, and that many people did not leave for distinct reasons. Cheung hoped that every effort could be made to reduce unnecessary conflicts and avoid bloodshed and tragedies. |
| 21:42     | Following a move by 30 volunteer first-aiders to leave PolyU campus on November 19, the last batch of 7 volunteer first-aiders would leave at night. Before they left, they firstly treated the injured protesters on the campus. |
| November 22, 2019 11:05 | Six protesters left the campus hand in hand and were registered by police.                                                                                                                                  |
| November 23, 21:09 | Former CPPCC Standing Committee member Lew Mon-hung entered PolyU at 8 pm. He said that 32 people were still staying at PolyU. He hoped that all of them would leave before November 24.                      |
| November 24, 10:31 | Lew Mon-hung left the campus with some protesters in the early morning. There was white smoke and charred smell from a restaurant on the campus.                                                             |
| 17:02     | In the afternoon, a representative of the left-behind protesters met with the media and said that some people were trapped for many days and were under extreme psychological pressure. They refused to eat and could not utter complete sentences. However, because they were still hiding, it was difficult for social workers and other members of the society to contact them. |
| 19:05     | Police called for those staying at PolyU to leave peacefully and reiterated that they hoped to resolve the incident with two principles, namely a peaceful approach and flexibility. Police said medical staff and clinical psychologists were arranged to provide appropriate assistance to those in need at the campus. |
| 23:30     | Another protester was accompanied by a social worker and sent to the hospital by ambulance. He was found in Block Q. Social workers persuaded him to leave for and he finally agreed to do so.                  |
| 23:58     | Some religious priests and their assistants tried to contact the rest of protesters through mobile phones. These protesters hoped to acquire some medicine. The religious priests and helpers left the medicine in designated position.  |

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lawyers. These important conditions were clearly a compromise made between mediators and police. Some die-hard protesters chose to stay in the campus until the day after the November 24 District Council elections were held. Intentionally or unintentionally, the hardline protesters who were determined to stay in the campus until the election day appeared to have a mobilizing impact on those voters supportive of protesters.

Overall, although the battle of the PolyU was like a bridge too far for protesters to win the anti-police campaign, their failure incurred international responses. Table 7.4 outlines the responses from the PRC, Taiwan and other foreign countries to the battle of PolyU. Predictably, Beijing condemned the violent protesters, supported the HKSAR government and police and expected the local courts to punish the lawbreakers. The Taiwan government appealed for the Hong Kong police to be tolerant,

4 “Underaged protestors at PolyU campus allowed to go home,” November 19, 2019, in https://www.ejinsight.com/eji/article/id/2307354/20191119-underage-protestors-at-polyu-campus-allowed-to-go-home, access date: April 10, 2020.
Table 7.4  The responses of PRC, Taiwan and foreign countries to the Battle of Polytechnic University

| Government | Remarks |
|------------|---------|
| PRC        | 1. “The situation in Hong Kong is no longer a simple peaceful demonstration, but it shows a handful of extreme violent criminals who are using violence against ordinary citizens in an attempt to interfere with the normal operation of Hong Kong society and endanger public order.”  
2. “Hong Kong’s top priority is to stop violence and restore order. The central government firmly supports not only the Hong Kong government’s administration to act in accordance with the law, but also the Hong Kong police to maintain social order. The central government also supports the Hong Kong judiciary to severely punish violent criminals in accordance with the law.” |
| Taiwan     | 1. “Hong Kong police’s firepower to suppress demonstrations has risen. The continued blockade of the university seriously threatens campus democracy and security, and it has an opportunity of increasing the risk of a collective humanitarian crisis.”  
2. “Condemns all acts of violence and tough crackdowns and calls on all parties to calm down and prevent the situation from deteriorating.”  
3. “The situation in Hong Kong is worrying. It should end early. The Hong Kong and Beijing governments should face the demands for freedom and human rights, rather than using shields, bullets and pistols.” |
| United States | 1. “The rapidly changing social conflicts and violence in Hong Kong call on both parties to exercise restraint, and violence on either side is unacceptable.”  
2. “Law enforcement alone cannot resolve turbulence and violence. The government must respond to social demands, including the establishment of an independent investigative committee to increase accountability. The Hong Kong government has a fundamental responsibility to restore Hong Kong to peace.”  
3. “The US reiterates our hope that Beijing will honor its commitments in the Sino-British Joint Declaration and protect Hong Kong’s liberal democracy and legal system.” |
| United Kingdom | 1. “The Hong Kong government has the responsibility to make every effort to prevent the confrontation, and the police should refrain from using live ammunition and other lethal force, because any bloodshed would have a devastating effect on Hong Kong.”  
2. “Violence from both police and students should be condemned.” |
| Japan      | “Restraint and peaceful dialogue should be adopted by the parties concerned to resolve the incident as soon as possible.” |

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and for Beijing and the Hong Kong government to face the demands of protesters positively. The US government appealed to all sides to adopt restraints, asked the Hong Kong government to set up an investigatory committee and urged Beijing to respect the Sino-British Joint Declaration on Hong Kong. While the British government appealed to all sides for restraint and peace, Japan advocated dialogue for all the parties concerned, especially as one Japanese student was arrested at the PolyU conflict. The European Union expressed its concern about the phenomenon that some medical staff members who went to assist protesters were eventually arrested by the police.

**Tactical Changes of the Police**

From the perspective of policing, there has been a noticeable tendency of the Hong Kong police to adopt a tougher, swifter and assertive action against protesters since the battle of the PolyU, especially after Chris Tang’s visit to Beijing to meet the Minister of Public Security Zhao Kezhi. Table 7.5 shows these tougher actions by the police against protesters in December 2019 and January 2020, just prior to the outbreak of Covid-19 which has temporarily dampened the frequency and intensity of the anti-police and anti-mainlandization protests. In a sense, the onset of Covid-19 has propelled many Hong Kong protesters to focus on their personal health, especially as more Hong Kong people have lost their jobs in the midst of the Coronavirus.

Table 7.5 shows that the police have been changing their tactics of policing protests since Chris Tang became the new commissioner. First,
Table 7.5  Tougher police action after Chris Tang’s visit to Beijing to meet Minister of Public Security Zhao Kezhi

| Date             | Details of police action                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| December 15, 2019| Several clashes occurred between police and protesters in Kowloon. Around 9:00 pm, police arrested 2 people during their clearance of a gathering of about 100 people outside the Langham Place in Mongkok. At 10:40 pm, police fired pepper spray at protesters, residents and journalists at the intersection of Nathan Road and Shantung Street. The police headed toward Sai Yeung Choi Street South, where they fired tear gas canisters. At 11:25 pm, several police officers pushed back a group of reporters near the intersection of Shantung and Portland Streets. A photojournalist for *Mad Dog Daily* argued with police near and was pepper-sprayed, beaten by batons, arrested and taken to Mongkok police station. |
| December 19, 2019| The police cracked down on the Spark Alliance, a non-profit group providing financial aid to pro-democracy protesters, over alleged activities of money laundering. The police seized HK$70 million of funds, including bank deposits, as well as investment and insurance products. Police arrested four suspects involved in the management of the Spark Alliance.                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| December 21, 2019| Hong Kong police swept into several shopping malls, chasing and arresting some demonstrators. They also pursued protesters at the Harbor City.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| December 24, 2019| Police clashed with protesters in shopping centers and hotels across Hong Kong. Protesters threw umbrellas and other objects at the police, who in turn fired tear gas and beat up protesters with batons. One police pointed a pistol at a crowd. In Mongkok, police used pepper spray to disperse protesters. At Mira Place shopping mall in Kowloon, 100 protesters broke the glass counters and sprayed anti-China graffiti on the walls and windows of the Starbucks coffee shop. In Yoho Mall, Yuen Long, a nervous man ran away from the police and injured himself after falling from the second floor of the mall. |
| December 25, 2019| During a stand-off on the Nathan Road in Mongkok in the early morning, police fired tear gas and pepper pellets at protesters who blocked roads, vandalized banks and threw petrol bombs at police vehicles. At about 2 am, a 16-year-old boy fell from a rooftop balcony of a Taiwanese restaurant, after police searched the premises for protesters. He was hospitalized with hand and leg injuries. Police denied using any force inside the restaurant. During daytime, protesters went to various malls to launch “shopping protests.” The police confronted them with pepper sprays in Shatin, Mongkok and Kowloon Bay. |
| December 26, 2019| For the third consecutive day, protesters and police clashed inside shopping malls. The police fired pepper spray and blue water liquid at protesters, arresting 300 people.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
the police were determined to eliminate and arrest the “valiant” elements of the protesters in relatively larger battles, such as the battle at the PolyU where 1100 protesters were registered and left the campus. Although some protesters at PolyU escaped through the footbridge on the night of November 18 and via the underground tunnel, the relatively more radical and violent protesters were all trapped inside the campus and had no

Table 7.5  (continued)

| Date             | Details of police action                                                                                                                                 |
|------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| December 28, 2019| Around 150 protesters gathered at the Sheung Shui Plaza without notifying the police beforehand. Police fired pepper spray and arrested 20 people, including a 13-year-old boy. |
| December 31, 2019| Police made several arrests after thousands of protesters occupied a road in Kowloon, while spectators counted down to midnight along the Victoria Harbor. The police arrested six people in Tin Shui Wai for putting posters and writings on the Lennon Wall. They forced them to kneel, including a pregnant woman who started to vomit. She had to wait for a long time before being sent to hospital. |
| January 1, 2020  | The police arrested 400 people across Hong Kong after a peaceful pro-democracy New Year’s Day march with the participation of hundreds of thousands of people. Scuffles broke out near the Hong Kong Shanghai Banking Corporation branch in Wan Chai. The police fired tear gas and water cannons to disperse the crowds. During the protest, a policeman was seen by the mass media taking off the protective goggles of Ted Hui, a Democratic Party lawmaker, and then pepper-sprayed his face. |
| January 8, 2020  | During a candlelight vigil in Tseung Kwan O to mark the second month of remembering the death of UST student Alex Chow Tsz-lok, 200 protesters clashed with the police. A plainclothes officer subdued a man, while uniform police sprayed another man in the face with blue liquid and detained two people. |
| January 11, 2020 | Police arrested a teenager for putting up pro-democracy posters outside the British consulate, sparking concern among UK legislators about the way in which the police enforced the law in Hong Kong. |
| January 19, 2020 | About 150,000 people attended an anti-CCP rally at the Chater Garden. Police stopped the rally on short notice and arrested its organizer Ventus Lau. In Mongkok, police fired tear gas at the protesters and used pepper spray at reporters. |
| January 25, 2020 | On the first day of Lunar New Year, just before 11 pm, protesters blocked the Portland Street and remembering the fourth anniversary of the Mongkok “Fishball Revolution.” Police arrived at the scene and fired tear gas to disperse the crowd. |

Sources: Various Hong Kong Chinese Newspaper form December 16, 2019, to January 26, 2020
choice but to leave later. Since the battle of PolyU, the “valiant” elements in the anti-police and anti-mainlandization movement have been keeping a very low profile, understanding the need for a more flexible strategy to oppose the government. Second, the police have been making swift and massive arrests once protesters are seen in shopping malls and on the streets. The idea is to pre-empt the action of protesters before the “valiant” elements join them. Third, the police targeted at the alleged financial sources of protesters, like arresting four organizers of the Stark Alliance on December 19, for this funding group appeared to collect donations for protesters and play a crucial role as a provider of legal aid for arrested protesters. Fourth, the police have been adopting a strong tactic in dealing with many reporters, who were criticized by the pro-Beijing mass media as supportive of protesters. To avoid reporters providing a “protective umbrella” for protesters, the police have been taken strong measures against them by using pepper spray. In fact, many reporters “hated” the police during the anti-extradition movement from June to December 2019. They were the target of police arrests and pepper spray, suffering from the inhalation of tear gas canisters fired by the police. The pro-Beijing media accused some protesters of disguising themselves as reporters, but it appeared the police could also use undercover agents to pretend as reporters and infiltrate front-line protesters. At the same time, some reporters of pro-Beijing dailies acted as the informants of both the police and PRC authorities. Under these chaotic circumstances, the worsening relations between police and reporters were inevitable. However, due to the hardline measures adopted by Chris Tang since November 2019, there has been no sign that the police have attempted to repair their already harmed relations with many reporters.

Table 7.6 illustrates the police use of their weapons and the number of arrests in the major protests from June 2019 to March 2020 as reported in the mass media. At the beginning of the anti-extradition protests, the mass media portrayed Rupert Dover and David John Jordan as relatively hardline commanders whose subordinate officers used tear gas, rubber bullets, bean bag rounds and sponge grenades extensively, just like the protests on June 12, July 14, July 21 and July 28. Interestingly, the police handling of the protests on July 1, from the perspective of using weapons, tended to be comparatively much milder, directly or indirectly leading to the occupation of LegCo by some radical protesters. The October 1

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5 Discussion with two reporters, December 2019.
Table 7.6 Police use of weapons and police arrests

| Date     | Event and place                              | Commander as reported by mass media | Weapons used                                        | Number of protesters who were arrested |
|----------|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| June 9   | Anti-extradition protest at Admiralty        | Rupert Dover                        | Batons and pepper spray                            | 19                                    |
| June 12  | Anti-extradition protest at Admiralty        | Rupert Dover and David John Jordan   | 240 tear gas canisters, 19 rubber bullets, 3 bean bag rounds, 30 sponge grenades | 32                                    |
| June 21  | Police headquarters                         | Rupert Dover                        | None                                               | 4                                     |
| July 1   | Anti-extradition protest outside Legislative Council | Rupert Dover                        | 27 tear gas canisters, 30 sponge grenades         | 9                                     |
| July 7   | Kowloon March                               | Rupert Dover                        | Unclear                                            | 6                                     |
| July 13  | Sheung Shui                                 | Rupert Dover                        | Unclear                                            | 2                                     |
| July 14  | Shatin                                      | Rupert Dover                        | Pepper spray                                       | 48                                    |
| July 21  | Protests in Sheung Wan                      | David John Jordan                   | 55 tear gas canisters, 9 rubber bullets, 25 sponge grenades | 23                                    |
| July 27  | Anti-triad protest in Yuen Long             | Local commanders                   | 118 tear gas canisters, 30 rubber bullets, 1 bean bag round, 33 sponge grenades | 11                                    |
| July 28  | Protests in Sheung Wan                      | David John Jordan                   | 408 tear gas canisters, 95 rubber bullets, 2 bean bag rounds, 50 sponge grenades | 49                                    |
| August 4 | Rallies at Mongkok, Cheung Kwan O and Hong Kong Island West | Local commanders | Batons, pepper smoke, pepper spray, tear gas canisters (numbers were not reported in the media) | 44                                    |
| Date         | Event and place                        | Commander as reported by mass media | Weapons used                                                                 | Number of protesters who were arrested |
|--------------|----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| August 5     | Protests at 7 districts                | Local commanders                    | 800 tear gas canisters, 140 rubber bullets, 24 sponge grenades               | 148                                    |
| August 9–12  | Protests in Tai Po, Shum Shui Po, Hong Kong Island East | Local commanders                    | Bean bag rounds, tear gas canisters (numbers not reported in the mass media) | 149 (including 111 males and 38 females) |
| August 24    | Protest in Kwun Tong                    | David John Jordan                    | 70 tear gas canisters, 24 rubber bullets, 31 sponge grenades                | 32                                     |
| August 25    | Protests in Tsuen Wan and Kwai Tsing   | David John Jordan                    | 145 tear gas canisters, 50 rubber bullets, 4 bean bag rounds, 13 sponge grenades, 1 shot from a pistol, water cannon | 54                                     |
| August 31    | Protest in Admiralty                    | David John Jordan                    | 241 tear gas canisters, 92 rubber bullets, 1 bean bag rounds, 13 sponge grenades, 2 shots from pistol, blue water cannon | 159 (63 arrested in Prince Edward and 16 in Causeway Bay) |
| September 8  | Rally in support of human rights and democracy | Local commanders                    | Water cannon, rubber bullets, tear gas canisters (numbers unclear)           | At least 6 were arrested               |
| September 14 | Amoy Plaza                             | Local commanders                    | Unclear                                                                      | 24 (all males)                         |
| September 15 | Protests in support of five demands    | Local commanders                    | Tear gas canisters, blue water cannon (numbers unclear)                     | 55 (48 males and 7 females)            |

(continued)
Table 7.6  (continued)

| Date          | Event and place                          | Commander as reported by mass media | Weapons used                                                                 | Number of protesters who were arrested |
|---------------|------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| September 29  | Anti-authoritarian protests in Admiralty and Mongkok | Local commanders                    | 328 tear gas canisters, 306 rubber bullets, 95 bean bag rounds, 72 sponge grenades, water cannon | 146                                    |
| October 1     | Protests at various districts            | Local commanders                    | 1400 tear gas canisters, 900 rubber bullets, 190 bean bag rounds, 230 sponge grenades, 6 shots from pistols, blue water cannons | 269 (178 males and 91 females)          |
| October 4–7   | Protests against anti-mask law          | Local commanders                    | Tear gas canisters, rubber bullet (numbers unclear)                           | 241 (170 males and 71 females)          |
| October 30    | Protest in Tuen Mun                      | Local commanders                    | Unclear                                                                      | 70                                     |
| November 11   | Dawn Action                              | Local commanders                    | 255 tear gas canisters, 204 rubber bullets, 45 bean bag rounds, 96 sponge grenades | 277 (206 males and 71 females)          |
| November 12   | Daybreak Action                          | Local commanders                    | 2330 tear gas canisters, 1770 rubber bullets, 434 bean bag rounds, 159 sponge grenades | 142 (97 males and 45 females)           |
| November 13   | Protests at various districts            | Local commanders                    | 578 tear gas canisters, 471 rubber bullets, 71 bean bag rounds, 22 sponge grenades | 224 (152 males and 72 females)          |
Table 7.6  (continued)

| Date       | Event and place                      | Commander as reported by mass media | Weapons used                                                                 | Number of protesters who were arrested |
|------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| November 11–16 | The Chinese University of Hong Kong | Local commanders                     | 2000 tear gas canisters, rubber bullets (numbers unclear)                      | 5                                      |
| November 13–26 | Hong Kong Polytechnic               | Local commanders                     | Tear gas canisters, water cannon (numbers unclear)                            | 1377                                   |
| November 21  | Protest at Yuen Long Station         | Local commanders                     | Unclear                                                                       | 6                                      |
| December 15  | Protest in Kowloon                  | Local commanders                     | 27 tear gas canisters, 5 rubber bullets                                      | 99                                     |
| December 22  | A rally supportive of Uyghurs in China | Local commanders                  | Pepper spray, batons, 2 rubber bullets                                      | 2                                      |
| December 24  | Protest at 5 districts               | Local commanders                     | Tear gas canisters, rubber bullets                                          | 165                                    |
| December 26  | Protests during Christmas            | Local commanders                     | Pepper spray, blue water liquid                                              | 300                                    |
| December 28  | Protest in Sheng Shui Plaza          | Local commanders                     | Pepper spray                                                                  | 20                                     |
| January 1    | Rally on the Hong Kong Island        | Local commanders                     | Unclear                                                                      | About 400                              |
| January 19   | Protest against the CCP              | Local commanders                     | Tear gas                                                                     | At least 30                            |
| January 31   | Mongkok protest                      | Local commanders                     | Unclear                                                                      | 7 (4 males and 3 females)              |
| February 8   | Cheung Kwan O                        | Local commanders                     | Unclear                                                                      | 117 (94 males and 23 females)          |
| February 29  | Mongkok protest                      | Local commanders                     | Unclear                                                                      | 115 (71 males and 44 females)          |
| March 8      | Protests in Tai Po and Cheung Kwan O | Local commanders                     | Unclear                                                                      | 63 (46 males and 17 females)           |
protests proved to be a turning point, for the number of arrests on a single day topped all the protests from June to October, leading to another large-scale arrest on November 11, when 287 people were arrested. The battle of the PolyU turned out to be the most decisive one, because 1377 people were arrested and registered by the police. All the arrests from mid-November onward have been quite massive in terms of single-day action by the police, like the protests on January 1, February 8 and February 19. Hence, the overall trend is for the police to take swift action and arrest protesters immediately, serving as a deterrent against the spread of protests to attract more supporters and radicals.

Interestingly, with the increase in police assertiveness, public satisfaction with the police declined over time. Diagram 7.1 shows that the ratings of public satisfaction with the Hong Kong police dropped from 61 out of 100 points in June 2019 to 39.42 in September, and finally to 35.34 in November 2019. Clearly, many citizens were unhappy with the police performance, including the ways in which they exercised power over the protesters. Indeed, from the perspective of Beijing, the Hong Kong police performed well in maintaining law and order. But from the perspective of Hong Kong citizens, the police could better strike a balance between the use of force to maintain law and order and their accountability to the public.

Diagram 7.2 shows the recorded police arrests and the battles at CUHK and PolyU proved to be the final battles in which 2637 protesters were arrested. Diagram 7.3 shows that many arrested protesters were young people. The number of arrested protesters who were aged 17 or below
Diagram 7.1  Rating of public satisfaction with the Hong Kong police. (Sources: “People’s Satisfaction with the Disciplinary Force,” in https://www.pori.hk/pop-poll/disciplinary-force, access date: April 16, 2020)

Diagram 7.2  Recorded police arrests from June 2019 to February 2020. (Source: Constructed from the police figures, June 2019 to February 2020. Note: The figures in July included 37 thugs who were not protesters)
rose from June to November 2019 and it declined after the battles at CUHK and PolyU. Similarly, the number of arresting those aged between 18 and 20 increased from June to November, after which it also dropped. However, the number of arrested protesters who were aged between 21 and above fluctuated over time, increasing from June to August, declining slightly in September but rising continuously and drastically until November after which the number of arrested protesters decreased.

**The Function of 2019 District Council Elections:**
**A Channel of Expressing Public Anger**

The battle of PolyU preceded the District Council elections that would be held on November 24. As mentioned before, the tragedy of besieging protesters at PolyU appeared to have mobilizing impacts on the voters supportive of them. Table 7.7 shows the results of District Council elections, which proved to have an important function of allowing voters to express their preferences after months of protests and societal disputes. The election results were shocking to most ordinary people, the HKSAR government and the central authorities in Beijing. The pro-democracy candidates, who got 124 directly elected seats in the 2015 district elections, acquired 389 directly elected seats in 2019. On the contrary, the
### Table 7.7 District Council elections: critical function as a channel for voicing public anger

| District       | Number of pro-democracy candidates elected in 2015 election | Number of pro-Beijing candidates elected in 2015 election | Number of other candidates elected in 2015 election | Number of pro-democracy candidates elected in 2019 election | Number of pro-Beijing candidates elected in 2019 election | Number of other candidates elected in 2019 election |
|----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Central and Western |                                                              |                                                          |                                                     |                                                              |                                                          |                                                     |
| Wan Chai       | 2                                                           | 11                                                       | 0                                                   | 9                                                           | 4                                                        | 0                                                   |
| Eastern        | 10                                                          | 25                                                       | 0                                                   | 32                                                          | 3                                                        | 0                                                   |
| Southern       | 5                                                           | 12                                                       | 0                                                   | 15                                                          | 2                                                        | 0                                                   |
| Yau Tsim Mong  | 3                                                           | 16                                                       | 0                                                   | 17                                                          | 3                                                        | 0                                                   |
| Sham Shui Po   | 4                                                           | 20                                                       | 0                                                   | 15                                                          | 10                                                       | 0                                                   |
| Kowloon City   | 9                                                           | 16                                                       | 0                                                   | 25                                                          | 0                                                        | 0                                                   |
| Wong Tai Sin   | 9                                                           | 28                                                       | 0                                                   | 28                                                          | 12                                                       | 0                                                   |
| Kwun Tong      | 4                                                           | 15                                                       | 1                                                   | 16                                                          | 4                                                        | 1                                                   |
| Tsuen Wan      | 8                                                           | 22                                                       | 0                                                   | 28                                                          | 4                                                        | 0                                                   |
| Tuen Mun       | 5                                                           | 36                                                       | 0                                                   | 33                                                          | 12                                                       | 0                                                   |
| Yuen Long      | 4                                                           | 18                                                       | 0                                                   | 15                                                          | 7                                                        | 0                                                   |
| North          | 6                                                           | 15                                                       | 0                                                   | 19                                                          | 2                                                        | 0                                                   |
| Tai Po         | 9                                                           | 16                                                       | 4                                                   | 26                                                          | 2                                                        | 3                                                   |
| Sai Kung       | 19                                                          | 20                                                       | 0                                                   | 40                                                          | 2                                                        | 0                                                   |
| Sha Tin        | 9                                                           | 20                                                       | 1                                                   | 27                                                          | 5                                                        | 0                                                   |
| Kwai           |                                                             |                                                           |                                                     |                                                              |                                                          |                                                     |
| Tsing Islands  | 2                                                           | 16                                                       | 0                                                   | 7                                                           | 11                                                       | 0                                                   |
| Total          | 124                                                         | 327<sup>a</sup>                                           | 7                                                   | 389                                                         | 86<sup>a</sup>                                           | 4                                                   |

A comparison of District Council election results, 2015 and 2019

Sources: For details, see [https://www.elections.gov.hk/dc2019/eng/index.html](https://www.elections.gov.hk/dc2019/eng/index.html) and [https://www.elections.gov.hk/dc2019/eng/index.html](https://www.elections.gov.hk/dc2019/eng/index.html), access date, April 9, 2020

<sup>a</sup>These figures included 27 elected representatives in rural villages in 2019
pro-Beijing forces, which obtained 327 directly elected seats in the 2015 district elections, only grasped 86 directly elected seats in the 2019 district elections. The results proved to be a tsunami reversing the pro-Beijing victory in 2015 to the pan-democratic landslide in 2019.

The shocking result of the Hong Kong democrats in grasping 389 of the 452 directly elected seats in 18 District Councils, together with an unprecedented voter turnout of 71.2 percent, demonstrated the anger of many Hong Kong people with the performance of the HKSAR government, ranging from the introduction of the deeply unpopular extradition bill to LegCo in June 2019 to the handling of both peaceful and violent protests by the police from July to November.

The pan-democrats captured most of the seats of 17 of the 18 District Councils—a completely astounding result. The pro-Beijing political party, Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong (DAB), suffered a devastating defeat. In the 2015 District Council elections, it gained 117 seats. In November 2019, the DAB only captured 21 seats out of its 181 nominated candidates. The huge defeat of the DAB sent shock waves to the PRC authorities handling Hong Kong matters. With the benefit of hindsight, the removal of Zhang Xiaoming from his director position at the HKMAO and Wang Zhimin from his post at the Liaison Office meant that, from Beijing’s perspective, the two top PRC officials had to be held accountable not only for the poor election result of pro-Beijing forces, but also perhaps for their obstinacy in pushing the extradition bill forward in the HKSAR.

This electoral victory of the democrats and the electoral debacle of pro-Beijing and pro-government forces had significant implications for Beijing’s policy toward Hong Kong and the political development of the HKSAR. Since the democrats will likely be able to grasp an additional 117 seats in the Election Committee that will select the Chief Executive in 2022, Beijing will likely be more cautious and conservative in the reform of the Chief Executive election in the HKSAR in the coming years. In other words, a cycle of Beijing’s tight policy on Hong Kong through the imposition of the extradition bill had a boomerang effect of stimulating the victory of democrats in district elections, a result which ironically would lead to a more conservative-minded attitude of Beijing toward electoral reforms in Hong Kong. This vicious cycle of Beijing’s control, which leads to democratic rebound in elections and then the center’s more cautious attitudes toward the city’s electoral reform, is becoming a new feature of Beijing-Hong Kong relations.
The outcome of the November 24 District Council elections seriously questioned Beijing’s policy toward Hong Kong. Beijing’s officials responsible for Hong Kong matters failed to understand the aspirations of many Hong Kong people. Their policy directives remained hardline. On the implementation side, the Hong Kong leaders were also adopting a hardline approach without any softline measures. As a result, many voters had no choice but to express their anger over the Hong Kong government. If Beijing and the Hong Kong leaders remain adamant in their hardline approach, the Hong Kong crisis will likely persist with violent confrontations between protesters and police. If Beijing adjusts its policy toward Hong Kong, a calmer atmosphere will be conducive to Beijing’s relations with many Hong Kong people.

On the other hand, quite a number of protest leaders and activists were directly elected. Table 7.8 shows that some protesters were eventually directly elected to District Councils. They included Fergus Leung, Sam Yip, Leung Pak-kin, Siu Tak-kin, Janelle Rosalynn Leung, Michael Mo, Tommy Cheung, Richard Chan and Jimmy Sham. As a leader of the CHRF, Sham was mysteriously attacked by thugs twice and fortunately escaped the second attack alive. His experiences showed that the political participation of some Hong Kong democrats to oppose the policies of the central government and the HKSAR administration did entail huge political risks and the danger of personal safety. Yet, the experiences of these protest activists did appear to confirm an argument made by the pro-Beijing local media, which contended that some protest activists did have the political intention of participating in district elections and being directly elected as councilors.

The Role of United States and the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act

If district elections in the HKSAR in November 2019 had the political function of allowing voters to express their preferences, this democratic choice made by voters was in conformity with the US policy toward Hong Kong, namely supportive of the development of democracy locally. Table 7.9 shows the remarks made by US politicians on the Hong Kong protests, including Marco Rubio, Ben Cardin, Jim Risch, Nancy Pelosi, Bob Menendez and Ted Cruz. They all supported the aspirations of protesters in Hong Kong—a move that led to PRC criticisms that US politicians “interfered” with Hong Kong matters.
Table 7.8  Protest leaders and activists who were elected to District Councils in 2019

| Constituency | Protest leaders or activists elected as district councilors | Prominent participation in anti-extradition movement |
|--------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Kwun Lung    | Fergus Leung                                                | 1. He was one of the members of the Hong Kong Higher Institutions of International Affairs Delegation, an organization formed by 12 Higher Institution Students’ Unions, which is dedicated to conducting civic diplomacy and internationalizing Hong Kong’s affairs. |
| Shek Tong Tsui Tai Fat Hau | Sam Yip Kam-lung, Leung Pak-kin | 1. He is the organizer of August 5 rally in Sai Wan. 2. He also stayed at the Polytechnic University during the battle between protesters and police in November 2019. |
| City Garden  | Jocelyn Chau Hui-yan                                        | 1. She was arrested by police during protest on August 11, 2019. 2. She was mysteriously attacked by pro-Beijing supporters on October 12, 2019. |
| Mongkok North | Siu Tak-kin                                                  | 1. He is a research associate and was the only candidate who put on a helmet and mask in the election campaign. |
| Yuet Wah     | Janelle Rosalynn Leung                                      | 1. She was mysteriously attacked by pro-Beijing supporters on October 8, 2019. |
| Sam Shing    | Michael Mo Kwan-tai                                         | 1. He was an organizer of two rallies at Tuen Mun. |
| Yuen Lung    | Tommy Cheung Sau-yin                                         | 1. He was a former member of Scholarism and a former student leader in the 2014 Umbrella Movement. |
On August 13, a netizen launched a rally at the Hong Kong International Airport. After having dinner at the airport hotel, Chen went to the airport to observe the conflict between police and protesters. He said, “I was astonished by the movement. I participated as a mediator” between police and demonstrators. He eventually got the title of “uncle airport” as labeled by protesters and the media. On November 2, 128 candidates running for the District Council elections held an election rally at in Victoria Park in Causeway Bay. Later, the police fired tear gas at the Victoria Park. Chan argued with the police and was met with pepper spray. He was subdued and arrested.

1. He was and is the convener of the Civil Human Rights Front.
2. He organized various important assemblies and rallies in the anti-extradition movement on June 9, June 16, July 1 and August 18, 2019.
3. He was mysteriously attacked by some thugs at Tak Hing Street on August 29 and later at Mongkok in October 16.

Sources: Various Chinese newspapers and online newspapers reports from October 6, 2019 to November 31, 2019
Similarly, US President Donald Trump made unprecedented comments on Hong Kong’s developments (Table 7.10). He paid special attention to Hong Kong shortly after the PAP was moved to the Shenzhen border with Hong Kong. On August 15, Trump said that he trusted President Xi Jinping could “quickly and humanely solve the Hong Kong problem”—a

| Name (party affiliation) | Remarks |
|--------------------------|---------|
| Marco Rubio (Republican Party) | “As over one million Hong Kong people take to the streets protesting amendments to the territory’s extradition law, the US must send a strong message that ‘we stand with those peacefully advocating for freedom and the rule of law and against Beijing’s growing interference in Hong Kong affairs.’” |
| Ben Cardin (Democratic Party) | “America’s strength has been and always will be in our values. We cannot stand idly by as the rights of the people of Hong Kong are trampled on by China.” |
| Jim Risch (Republican Party) | “A Hong Kong that safeguards its autonomy, upholds fundamental freedoms, and maintains an open business environment is good for Hong Kong, good for the United States, and good for the world.” |
| Nancy Pelosi (Democratic Party) | “The people of Hong Kong deserve a future of justice and autonomy and freedom from fear that they were promised when Basic Law—and for which they have long been courageously fighting.” |
| Bob Menendez (Democratic Party) | “As the world bears witness to the brutality with which security forces in Hong Kong are responding to tens of thousands of pro-democracy activists in a display of force not seen in years, I am proud to join my colleagues in introducing this important legislation to reaffirm our steadfast support for Hong Kong’s autonomy, democracy and respect for human rights.” |
| Ted Cruz (Republican Party) | “Today brave men and women [and] boys and girls are standing up and demanding that the Chinese Communist Party protect Hong Kong’s autonomy, protect free speech, and defend human rights. Despite these peaceful protests, the Chinese Communist Party is fighting back with brutality and violence. The police brutality that we’ve seen and the Chinese Communist Party’s larger assault on the people of Hong Kong has been shameful. Just this past weekend, the Hong Kong police began attacking young, innocent students who were peacefully protesting that brutality.” |

Sources: “Rubio, Cardin, Risch, Menendez Reintroduce Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act,” in [https://www.rubio.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2019/6/rubio-cardin-risch-menendez-reintroduce-hong-kong-human-rights-and-democracy-act](https://www.rubio.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2019/6/rubio-cardin-risch-menendez-reintroduce-hong-kong-human-rights-and-democracy-act), access date: February 5, 2020; “Pelosi Remarks at Press Event on Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act,” in [https://www.speaker.gov/newsroom/91819-0](https://www.speaker.gov/newsroom/91819-0), access date: February 5, 2020 and “Sen. Cruz: ‘The People of America Stand With Hong Kong,’” in [https://www.cruz.senate.gov/?p=press_release&id=4777](https://www.cruz.senate.gov/?p=press_release&id=4777), access date: February 5, 2020
kind of diplomatic pressure exerted on the PRC to refrain from taking strong action against Hong Kong’s protesters. Most importantly, the Hong Kong protests took place at a time when China and the United States were engaging in a trade war. As such, the US action on Hong Kong, including the passage of the US Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act, was seen by the PRC as an “explicit” interference with the HKSAR matters. But from the perspective of the United States, it had the legitimate concern about Hong Kong, where civil liberties and its rule of law were and are the universal values cherished by the US government.

On September 15, 2019, the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act acquired the support from the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the House Foreign Affairs Committee. On November 20, the House of Representatives passed the Senate version of the Act. Seven days later, President Trump signed the bill into law, marking a crucial step made by the US to promote democracy and human rights in the HKSAR amid the protests. The Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act of 2019 can sanction those Hong Kong officials and elites responsible for the “violation” of

### Table 7.10 US President Donald Trump’s remarks on Hong Kong

| Date       | Remarks                                                                                                                                 |
|------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| August 14, 2019 | “Our Intelligence has informed us that the Chinese Government is moving troops to the border with Hong Kong. Everyone should be calm and safe!” |
| August 15, 2019 | “I know President Xi of China very well. He is a great leader who very much has the respect of his people. He is also a good man in a ‘tough business.’ I have zero doubt that if President Xi wants to quickly and humanely solve the Hong Kong problem, he can do it.” “If President Xi would meet directly and personally with the protestors, there would be a happy and enlightened ending to the Hong Kong problem. I have no doubt!” |
| August 28, 2019 | “So interesting to read and see all of the free and interesting advice I am getting on China, from people who have tried to handle it before and failed miserably—In fact, they got taken to the cleaners. We are doing very well with China. This has never happened to them before!” |
| December 20, 2019 | “Had a very good talk with President Xi of China concerning our giant trade deal. China has already started large scale purchase of agricultural product & more. Formal signing being arranged. Also talked about North Korea, where we are working with China, and Hong Kong progress!” |

Sources: Compiled from the reports of Hong Kong newspapers on President Trump’s remarks, August to December 2019. Also see Trump’s Twitter, https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/status/116683442098163712?lang=en, access date: April 10, 2020
The Hong Kong democrats and protesters were emboldened and empowered by their success in lobbying the US Congressmen, Senators and officials on the need for the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act of 2019. The pro-Beijing mass media had already leveled criticisms at these democrats, including the young activists, calling them “traitors.” In fact, many Hong Kong people share the universal values of human rights, democracy, civil liberties and the rule of law as the American political elites. Table 7.12 shows the rallies organized by the Hong Kong protesters in support of the American deeper involvement into Hong Kong’s democratic development. As such, while some Hong Kong democrats who share US values will continue to fight for local democratic change, they will be destined to be labeled by the pro-Beijing mass media as “pro-American traitors.”

The shared values between the protesters and the US government can be seen in Table 7.13, which sums up how the United States saw the

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**Table 7.11  Key points in the US Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act**

| Point |
|-------|
| 1. “This bill directs various departments to assess whether political developments in Hong Kong justify changing Hong Kong’s unique treatment under U.S. law.” |
| 2. The Department of State shall “report and certify annually to Congress as to whether Hong Kong is sufficiently autonomous from China to justify its unique treatment.” |
| 3. The Department of Commerce shall “report annually to Congress on China’s efforts to use Hong Kong to evade U.S. export controls and sanctions and the extent of such violations occurring in Hong Kong generally.” |
| 4. If “Hong Kong has proposed or enacted legislation that puts U.S. citizens at risk of extradition to mainland China or to another country that lacks defendants’ rights protections, the President shall report to Congress on (1) a strategy for protecting U.S. citizens and businesses in Hong Kong, and (2) whether Hong Kong is legally competent to administer various law-enforcement agreements between Hong Kong and the United States.” |
| 5. The State Department “may not deny work- or student-visa applications from an otherwise qualified Hong Kong resident due to a politically motivated adverse action by the Hong Kong government against the applicant. The State Department shall encourage other democratic countries to take a similar approach.” |
| 6. The President shall “report to Congress a list of individuals responsible for committing acts that violate internationally recognized human rights in Hong Kong, including the extrajudicial rendition or torture of any person in Hong Kong. The bill bars such individuals from entering the United States and imposes sanctions on them.” |

Sources: “Summary of Public Law No: 116-76 (11/27/2019)—Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act of 2019,” in https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/senate%20bill/1838?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22Hong+Kong+Human+Rights+and+Democracy+Act+of+2019%22%5D%7D&s=1&r=1, access date: February 5, 2020
Table 7.12 Pro-American peaceful protests in Hong Kong

| Date               | Theme of the peaceful protest                                      | Objective(s)                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Number of participants according to organizer (police estimates) |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| August 16, 2019    | Rally to stand with Hong Kong, power to the people                  | To demand for Hong Kong’s democracy and government accountability through the influences from the United States and United Kingdom.                                                                           | 60,000 (7100)                                                 |
| September 8, 2019  | Rally for the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act             | Submit the protesters’ signed letter to the American Consulate in Hong Kong to urge the United States to pass the Act.                                                                                           | 5000 (police did not have any estimate)                        |
| October 14, 2019   | Rally of fighting with Hong Kong, Justice to our Victims          | Calling for the US Congress to pass an act that would punish those Hong Kong people responsible for suppressing freedoms in Hong Kong. The sanctions include the act of freezing their US-based assets and denying their entry into the United States. | 130,000 (25,200)                                             |
| November 2, 2019   | Rally in support of Human Rights and Democracy Act                 | Urge the US Senate and Congress to pass the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act.                                                                                                                      | 1000                                                          |
| November 28, 2019  | Thanksgiving assembly on the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act | Express their gratitude to the United States for passing the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act.                                                                                                         | 100,000 (9600)                                               |

Sources: “Watch again: Hong Kong students hold a ‘Power of the People’ rally,” in https://www.euronews.com/2019/08/16/watch-live-hong-kong-students-hold-a-power-of-the-people-rally, access date: April 4, 2020; “Fight with Hong Kong’: 130,000 gather to urge US to pass human rights act to monitor city’s autonomy, organizers say,” Hong Kong Free Press, in https://www.hongkongfp.com/2019/10/15/fight-hong-kong-130000-gather-urge-us-pass-human-rights-act-monitor-citys-autonomy-organizers-say/, access date: April 4, 2020; “In Pictures: Thousands attend Thanksgiving rally as US passes Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act,” Hong Kong Free Press, in https://www.hongkongfp.com/2019/11/29/pictures-thousands-attend-thanksgiving-rally-as-us-passes-hong-kong-human-rights-democracy-act/, access date: April 4, 2020; “Rally for HK act in US congress gets police nod,” The Standard, https://www.thestandard.com.hk/section-news/section/11/212530/Rally-for-HK-act-in-US-congress-gets-police-nod, access date: April 4, 2020
Table 7.13  Key points of the US State Department’s 2019 country reports on human rights practices in Hong Kong

1. “Throughout the year, however, domestic and international observers continued to express concerns about central PRC government encroachment on the SAR’s autonomy.”

2. “From June to year’s end, Hong Kong experienced frequent protests, with some exceeding more than one million participants. Most protesters were peaceful, but some engaged in violence and vandalism. The protests began as a movement against the government’s introduction of legislation that would have allowed the extradition of criminal suspects to any jurisdiction, including mainland China, but subsequently evolved to encompass broader concerns.”

3. “Significant human rights issues included: police brutality against protesters and persons in custody; arbitrary arrest; substantial interference with the rights of peaceful assembly and freedom of association; and restrictions on political participation.”

4. “The government took steps to prosecute and punish officials who committed human rights abuses but resisted widespread calls for a special inquiry into alleged police brutality that occurred during the demonstrations. The government continued to rely on the Independent Police Complaints Council (IPCC) to review allegations against the police.”

5. “Many Hong Kong residents and experts alleged that police officers on several occasions used excessive force to disperse crowds or arrest individuals suspected of participating in violent protests. For example, on August 31, police rushed onto a subway train and beat several individuals while making arrests. In August the UN Human Rights Office stated there was ‘credible evidence’ the Hong Kong police were ‘employing less lethal weapons in ways that are prohibited by international norms and standards’ when conducting crowd dispersal operations. Critics also noted that police officers frequently did not show identification when conducting crowd dispersal operations, which made it difficult to identify officers who may have committed abuses.”

6. “In August the government blocked legislators, journalists, and justices of the peace from visiting the San Uk Ling Holding Center, where many protesters were detained. In September Chief Executive Lam announced that the police would no longer hold protesters at the San Uk Ling Holding Center. The IPCC announced it visited the San Uk Ling Holding Center on October 8 and affirmed that it would ‘make recommendations to the Police should any area of improvement has been identified.’ As of the year’s end, however, the IPCC provided no report on its findings.”

7. “Police officers frequently did not display identification when conducting crowd dispersal operations, a practice which made it difficult to identify officers who may have committed abuses. In August the head of the IPCC, the police watchdog, criticized police for not clearly displaying identification on uniforms, but the practice continued after August.”

8. “Police generally apprehended suspects openly when they observed suspects committing a crime or with warrants based on sufficient evidence and issued by a duly authorized official. Police must promptly charge arrested suspects. The government respected this right and generally brought arrested persons before a judicial officer within 48 hours. Detainees were generally informed promptly of charges against them. There was a functioning bail system.”
9. “Authorities allowed detainees access to a lawyer of their choice, although the Hong Kong Bar Association reported that lawyers experienced obstruction at police stations and delays in seeing clients arrested during protests. Suspects were not detained incommunicado or held under house arrest. Interviews of suspects are required to be videotaped.”

10. “Some SAR and central government actions restricted or sought to restrict the right to express or report on dissenting political views, particularly support for Hong Kong independence.”

11. “Some legal restrictions on the ability of individuals to criticize the government publicly without reprisal. Police arrested several individuals for damaging the national flag, which is illegal. For example, in May police arrested a pro-independence activist for damaging the Chinese national flag during a protest against the controversial extradition bill. In October, media reported police asked Facebook to remove user posts about police handling of protests. Facebook reportedly declined to do so.”

12. “Media reports indicated that on several occasions police arrested onlookers not involved in protests. Police also fired thousands of rounds of tear gas to disperse crowds. Several human rights organizations repeated longstanding concerns that the SAR’s legal definitions of illegal assembly and rioting, charges frequently brought against protesters, were overly broad.”

13. “In October Chief Executive Lam, through executive fiat under the colonial-era Emergency Regulations Ordinance (ERO), banned the wearing of masks. Protesters frequently wore masks to protect themselves from tear gas and to hide their identity from police and from employers who might be pressured to punish employees who support the protests. In November a Hong Kong court ruled the government’s use of the ERO to implement the mask ban unconstitutional.”

14. “In August, two unknown men attacked Jimmy Sham, the leader of the Civil Human Rights Front (CHRF), with baseball bats the day before the CHRF was scheduled to lead a large protest march. In October unknown men used hammers to attack Jimmy Sham again. The CHRF was the organizer of the year’s largest protests. On several occasions, prodemocracy protesters also physically attacked allegedly pro-government individuals. For example, in November, one protester lit a man who was heckling him on fire.”

Source: “2019 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: China (Includes Hong Kong, Macau, and Tibet)—Hong Kong,” in https://www.state.gov/reports/2019-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/china/hong-kong/, access date: March 13, 2020
protests in Hong Kong from June to December 2019. The US State Department remained critical of how the HKSAR government and police handled the protests, ranging from Beijing’s “encroachment” to the extradition bill, from police action to government prosecution of protesters, from the need to set up a special inquiry commission to the police use of “excessive” force, from the San Uk Ling center to the police’s arbitrary behavior and from the anti-mask law to the mysterious attacks on pro-democracy protesters. The list compiled by the US State Department was comprehensive. Indeed, from the vantage point of the PRC, such US comments constituted external “interference” with China’s domestic affairs.

Strategically speaking, the United States used the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act to exert pressure on the PRC over Hong Kong while using Sino-US trade negotiations as another means of reducing American trade deficits vis-à-vis China. This two-pronged strategy revealed the American geopolitical and geo-economic strategy in an era of China’s rapid rise, both economically and politically. As the United States tried to portray its democracy and human rights as universal values, the Hong Kong protests presented a golden opportunity for US leaders and politicians to pressure the PRC. On the other hand, the PRC realized the American strategy of reasserting its “superpower” status. As such, the entire anti-extradition, anti-police and anti-mainlandization movement had to be understood in the context of Sino-American rivalries, both economically and politically.

THE ROLE OF TAIWAN IN HONG KONG PROTESTS

Given that the ROC on Taiwan shares the ideology of supporting democracy and human rights as with the US government, the role of Taiwan in the Hong Kong protests deserves attention. First and foremost, some radical protesters who plunged into LegCo building on July 1 escaped to Taiwan, preferring to stay in a democratic society and polity rather than being “punished” and “persecuted” in the HKSAR. Second, the pro-Beijing media criticized the pro-independence Taiwan State-Building Party for supporting Hong Kong protesters. The website and Facebook of the Taiwan State-Building Party showed that it sent helmets and logistical supplies to Hong Kong protesters through airline passengers traveling between the two places. After local media reports revealed the Taiwan
connections with Hong Kong protests, the Hong Kong police occasion-
ally checked the suitcases of the travelers between the two places, trying to
inspect whether helmets and other logistical supplies were provided to the
Hong Kong protesters.

Table 7.14 shows that the State-Building Party appeared to be the most
active one supportive of Hong Kong protesters, including the lobbying
efforts at helping Hong Kong’s protesters who escaped to Taiwan shortly
after July 1, 2019, through the enactment of a Refugee Law. The DPP
helped Hong Kong’s protesters, whereas the New Power Party interacted
with some Hong Kong political activists. The Kuomintang (KMT)
remained relatively inactive, so as the People First Party and Taiwan
People’s Party. Moreover, the Chi-Nan Presbyterian Church in Taipei was
reportedly helping 200 Hong Kong protesters to stay in Taiwan,

| Taiwan State-Building Party | 1. Supplying helmet, masks and other resources to Hong Kong’s protesters. |
|                            | 2. Lobbying the Taiwan government to pass a legislation on the Refugee Law to help Hong Kong’s political dissidents. |
|                            | 3. Organizing pro-Hong Kong rallies and assemblies. |
|                            | 4. Supporting and cooperating with non-governmental organizations to assist Hong Kong’s political dissidents in Taiwan. |
| Democratic Progressive Party | 1. Organizing pro-Hong Kong rallies and assemblies. |
| New Power Party | 1. Organizing pro-Hong Kong rallies, assemblies and petitions. |
|                 | 2. Supporting and cooperating with non-governmental organizations to help Hong Kong’s political dissidents in Taiwan. |
|                 | 3. Interacting with political activists from Hong Kong |
| Kuomintang | No prominent interaction with Hong Kong protesters |
| People First Party | No prominent interaction with Hong Kong protesters |
| Taiwan People’s Party | No prominent interaction with Hong Kong protesters |

Sources: The Liberty Times, September 23, 2019, in https://news.ltn.com.tw/news/politics/breaking-news/2924205 access date: April 15, 2020, November 8, 2019, in https://news.ltn.com.tw/news/politics/breakingnews/2971654 access date: April 15, 2020, United Daily News, September 25, 2019, in https://udn.com/news/story/120538/4067325 access date: April 15, 2020, Newstalk, June 17, 2019, in https://newtalk.tw/news/view/2019-06-17/260750 access date: April 15, 2020
providing the necessary assistance and arranging living subsidies through non-governmental organizations for the young political dissidents.6

Some Hong Kong protesters who escaped to Taiwan and who are staying there have expressed their feelings in writings. They have encountered tremendous psychological pressure due to their need to adapt to a new living environment.7 Some also need to cope with financial difficulties; some wanted to study and work in a new place; some felt regretful of their exile to Taiwan. Their commonality is their distrust in the rule of law in the HKSAR.8 The Hong Kong protesters who stay in Taiwan tend to have some nostalgic feelings about the HKSAR. Some feel painful, but they slowly adapt to life in Taiwan, perhaps becoming political exiles who are deeply dissatisfied with Hong Kong’s political system. As with Lam Wing-kei, one of the publishers of the Causeway Bay Bookstore who eventually migrated to Taiwan and opened a bookstore in Taipei in April 2020,9 these Hong Kong protesters have become a new breed of political dissidents who have chosen to vote with their feet and who left the HKSAR for a democratic political system with values shared by them.

As with the US politicians, the Taiwan counterparts made frequent comments on the Hong Kong protests. Table 7.15 shows the remarks made by Taiwan’s political leaders on the Hong Kong extradition bill and the inapplicability of the “one country, two systems” in Taiwan. All of them denounced the way in which the protesters were handled by the HKSAR government. While Han Kuo-yu of the Kuomintang refrained from criticizing the PRC, Chiang Wan-an from the same party criticized the “one country, two systems” and supported the Hong Kong protesters. The DPP leaders like Tsai Ing-wen and Lin Fei-fan utilized the Hong Kong protests to point their fingers at not only the PRC regime but also the need for the Taiwan people to defend and cherish their existing freedom and lifestyle. As such, the Taiwan politicians all used the Hong Kong

6 “Many ‘traumatized’ protesters find refuge in Taiwan church,” The Standard, December 31, 2019, in https://www.thestandard.com.hk/section-news/section/11/214946/Many-traumatized-protesters%2D%2Dfind-refuge-in-Taiwan-church, access date: April 25, 2020.
7 See their feelings that were expressed through their writings, published in https://m.facebook.com/aegisvahk/?refid=52&__tn__=C-R, access date: April 26, 2020.
8 The observation from Jeff Loo who had an indirect communication with a Hong Kong protester through a worker of a Taiwan interest group that helped Hong Kong’s protesters. The protester also wrote down his feelings on a sheet of paper, September 7, 2019.
9 Apple Daily, April 26, 2020, p. A1.
### Table 7.15 Remarks of Taiwan political leaders on the Hong Kong extradition bill

| Name (Party Affiliation) | Remark(s)                                                                                                                                 |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Tsai Ing-wen (Democratic Progressive Party) | 1. “Anyone concerning themselves with freedom, democracy and human rights around the world will also be following the march and will also be very supportive of the people of Hong Kong.”  
2. “Taiwan is no exception, and we also support the people of Hong Kong in their pursuit of freedom, democracy and human rights.”  
3. “Freedom is like the air; you only become aware of its existence when you start to suffocate.”  
4. “I emphasize once again that ‘one country, two systems’ is absolutely unacceptable to Taiwan.”  
5. “Taiwan could never accept ‘one country, two systems.’ Once we accept the framework, we will lose our rights to defend freedom and democracy, we will lose our rights to decide on our future.”  
6. “I want to urge Taiwanese people to pay attention to Hong Kong’s development, to support Hong Kong and to defend Taiwan.” |
| Lin Fei-fan (Democratic Progressive Party) | 1. “It’s not so much today Hong Kong, tomorrow Taiwan, but today Hong Kong, today Taiwan.”  
2. “If Hong Kong is facing this evil law today, then we will suffer too.”  
3. “We need more Taiwanese friends to stand on the front line. We must send a clear message to the international community, to Hong Kong, to the Chinese government and to the Taiwanese government: We know, and we care.” |
| Han Kuo-yu (Kuomintang) | 1. “One country, two systems’ plan wasn’t working for Hong Kong. Do we even have to talk about it? Everyone knows.”  
2. “The rule of law in Hong Kong has always attracted the attention of Hong Kong society and all walks of life.”  
3. “According to the Basic Law of Hong Kong, Hong Kong has the power of final adjudication.”  
4. “Law, clean and competent government, liberalization, and efficiency are the four pillars of Hong Kong’s economic development.”  
5. “We hope that the Hong Kong government will make a decision to reassure the people of Hong Kong in response to the concerns of the people of Hong Kong and the outside world.”  
6. “As a sovereign country, the ROC is totally different from Hong Kong’s past history and political reality. The overwhelming majority of Taiwan people believe that Hong Kong’s ‘one country, two systems,’ whether successful or unsuccessful, is not applicable to Taiwan. Although we have no confidence in the DPP’s governance, we are confident in Taiwan’s democracy and people.” |

(continued)
Table 7.15 (continued)

| Name (Party Affiliation) | Remark(s) |
|-------------------------|-----------|
| Chiang Wan-an (Kuomintang) | 1. “Students and young people in Hong Kong are not afraid of the forceful crackdown by the Hong Kong police. [To those who] raise a voice and shout to the world in order to defend freedom and democracy, I must pay the highest respect for such bravery.”  
2. “In Taiwan, there is no room for ‘one country, two systems,’ and the constitutional system of democracy and freedom cannot be damaged or compromised.”  
3. “In addition to paying close attention to and maintaining the personal safety of Taiwanese students studying and working in Hong Kong, the government should also provide Hong Kong people with humanitarian assistance when necessary.” |
| Huang Kuo-chang (New Power Party) | 1. “As the authorities were preparing to use emergency legislation and martial law to control education and transportation, and to oppress the people of Hong Kong, it was important for the people of Taiwan to stand together and rally in Hong Kong’s support.” |

Sources: “Taiwanese Come Out in Support of Hong Kong Anti-Extradition Protestors,” Radio Free Asia, June 10, 2019, in https://www.rfa.org/english/news/china/hongkong-taiwan-06102019141346.html, access date: April 6, 2020; “The ripple effect of the Hong Kong anti-extradition protests on Taiwan politics,” Hong Kong Free Press, July 15, 2019, in https://hongkongfp.com/2019/07/15/ripple-effect-hong-kong-anti-extradition-protests-taiwan-politics/, access date: April 6, 2020; “‘I don’t know’ says Kaohsiung Mayor Han when asked about Hong Kong protests,” Taiwan News, in https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/3720972, access date: April 6, 2020; “Hong Kong democracy activists visit Taiwan’s political parties,” Taiwan News, in https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/3771048, access date: April 6, 2020, and “Chiang Kai-shek’s great-grandson says ‘no room for one country, two systems’ in Taiwan,” Taiwan News, in https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/3816825, access date: April 6, 2020.
protests to serve their campaigns in the presidential and legislative elections in January 2020.

As a matter of fact, the concerns expressed by the United States and Taiwan on Hong Kong’s protests were shared by some other foreign countries. Table 7.16 shows that UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson expressed his concern about the violence resulting from the protests and he hoped for dialogue between the stakeholders. The French Prime Minister Emmanuel Macron appealed to the political stakeholders in the HKSAR to engage in dialogue and de-escalate violence, while the German Prime Minister Angela Merkel also called for mutual dialogue. The Hong Kong protests clearly became an international concern about how the PRC and Hong Kong government dealt with protesters. Unlike the position of the United Kingdom, France and Germany, Singapore’s Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong believed that the demands made by protesters were intended to “humiliate and bring down the government,” adopting a more pro-Beijing position. However, Lee appealed to the HKSAR government to consider a more liberal approach to tackling the political impasse. The Malaysian Prime Minister Mohammad Mahathir even went so far as to ask Carrie Lam to resign.

### THE CONTINUATION OF HARDLINE APPROACH TO HONG KONG: MASS ARRESTS ON APRIL 18, 2020

The replacement of Zhang Xiaoming of the HKMAO and Wang Zhimin of the Liaison Office with Xia Baolong and Luo Huining in early 2020 signaled a continuation of the PRC’s hardline approach to dealing with the Hong Kong protesters, including peaceful ones led by the moderate democrats. The new PRC authorities have continued to consolidate their united front work on the pro-Beijing elites, including businesspeople, whose political orientations in the 2019 protests tended to be relatively politically conservative and nationalistic. In fact, the response of some Hong Kong business tycoons was noteworthy, for their orientations mirrored the divided opinions between a more pro-Beijing line and a more pro-democracy stance as with the foreign countries. Table 7.17 shows that business tycoon Li Ka-shing was more sympathetic with the protesters, appealing to the HKSAR government to understand the aspirations of the young people. In September 2019, Li remarked that political problems needed political solutions, and that the government should “forgive”
Table 7.16  Remarks of other foreign leaders on Hong Kong’s anti-extradition movement

| Name (Country)       | Remarks                                                                                                                                 |
|----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Boris Johnson (UK)   | 1. “We are seriously concerned by the ongoing violence, and the escalation between protesters and police.”                                 |
|                      | 2. “Political dialogue is the only way forward and we want to see the HK authorities agree a path to resolve this situation.”              |
| Lee Hsien Loong (SG) | 1. “I don’t see any easy way forward because the demonstrators, they say they have five major demands, and not one can be compromised.” |
|                      | 2. “But those are not demands which are meant to be a program to solve Hong Kong’s problems.”                                           |
|                      | 3. “Those are demands which are intended to humiliate and bring down the government.”                                                    |
|                      | 4. “So far, the SAR government has gone for conservative approaches and problems have not really significantly improved.”               |
| Mohamad Mahathir (MY) | 1. “For the administrator (Lam), I think (the) best thing is to resign.”                                                                     |
|                      | 2. “Carrie Lam conscientiously says that the people of Hong Kong are right in rejecting the (extradition) law.”                            |
|                      | 3. “Carrie Lam has to obey the masters, at the same time she has to ask her conscience.”                                                  |
|                      | 4. “I think in the end, that is what China will do (in Hong Kong).”                                                                        |
| Emmanuel Macron (FR)  | 1. “I shared our concerns (on Hong Kong Issue) and those of Europe.”                                                                       |
|                      | 2. “We have repeatedly called on the parties involved to dialogue, to show restraint, to de-escalate.”                                    |
|                      | 3. He said he had told President Xi the “core of the issue was to stress the need for a de-escalation through dialogue.”                   |
| Angela Merkel (DE)   | 1. She told the Chinese government that the “rights and freedoms in Hong Kong must of course be guaranteed.”                               |
|                      | 2. “In the current situation, everything must be done to avoid violence.”                                                                  |
|                      | 3. “And the solutions can only be found in a political process—meaning through dialogue.”                                                 |

Sources: “Hong Kong protest violence ‘deeply disturbing,’ says UK government as Boris Johnson calls for ‘restraint on all sides,’” Hong Kong Free Press, in https://hongkongfp.com/2019/11/11/hong-kong-protest-violence-deeply-disturbing-says-uk-govt-boris-johnson-calls-restraint-sides/, access date: April 6, 2020; Dewey Sim, “Singapore’s Lee Hsien Loong a social media hero in China for Hong Kong protest comments,” South China Morning Post, October 18, 2019, in https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/politics/article/3033441/singapores-lee-hsien-loong-social-media-hero-china-hong-kong, access date: April 6, 2020; “Hong Kong’s Carrie Lam should resign, says Malaysian PM Mahathir Mohamad,” Hong Kong Free Press, in https://hongkongfp.com/2019/10/04/hong-kongs-carrie-lam-resign-says-malaysian-pm-mahathir-mohamad/, access date: April 6, 2020; “France’s Macron says he raised the Hong Kong situation with Xi Jinping,” Reuters, November 6, 2019, in https://www.reuters.com/article/us-hong-kong-protests-macron/frances-macron-says-he-raised-the-hong-kong-situation-with-xi-jinping-idUSKBN1XGIJO, access date: April 6, 2020; “Hong Kong: Angela Merkel says China must ‘guarantee’ rights and freedoms,” The Guardian, in https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/sep/07/hong-kong-angela-merkel-says-china-must-guarantee-rights-and-freedoms-in, access date: April 6, 2020
Table 7.17 Business tycoon’s remarks on Hong Kong’s protests

| Name               | Remarks                                                                                                                                 |
|--------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Li Ka-shing        | 1. “The best intentions can bring the worst results.”  
                      2. “Cease the anger with love.”  
                      3. “Love China, love Hong Kong, love oneself; love freedom, love empathy, love rule of law.”  
                      4. “The road to Hell is often paved with good intentions. We need to be mindful of unintended consequences.”  
                      5. “It is hard to imagine a better world when the community is highly charged. Violence in thoughts and actions is not a means to accomplish any vision because they misrepresent—peaceful situations can come to feel dangerous, the percolation thereafter will be self-fulfilling.”  
                      6. “I think the government heard the messages from the protestors loud and clear and is diligently racking their brains now for solutions”  
                      7. “The young always fear, the future has nothing to do with them. Investing in our next generation will always bear fruit for our city. Investing in the future matters.” |
| Annie Wu Suk-ching | 1. “The views of a small group of radical protestors do not represent the views of all 7.5 million Hongkongers.”  
                      2. “I have given up hope [on these youngsters] and will not waste my time talking to them, as they have no idea what they are doing and what they should do. … Their brains have been occupied by other ideas and that is irrevocable.” |
| Peter Woo Kwong-ching | 1. “Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor is a Hong Kong daughter. Her proposal on the extradition bill have good intentions to Hong Kong’s future.”  
                        2. “The unlawful act of violence and intimidation, against civilians, in the pursuit of political aims—some say this is the definition of terrorism by the Oxford English Dictionary.”  
                        3. “I call on those whichever group they are from: red, yellow, blue, white or black, please don’t resort to violence.”  
                        4. “The extradition bill is now game over. … The current five demands are just some pretenses to fight for what they failed to achieve in the ‘Occupy Central’ movement that go beyond what is permitted by the Basic Law.”  
                        5. “There will be zero gain like what happened in the Occupy Central movement five years ago. … Please don’t make Hong Kong pay a heavy price again.” |
Table 7.17  (continued)

| Name       | Remarks                                                                                                                                 |
|------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Gordon Wu | 1. “Young people are particularly ‘desperate’ for Hong Kong to get full democracy.”                                                      |
|            | 2. “The recent protests were actually sparked by anger over the city’s wealth gap and housing woes.”                                      |
|            | 3. “Is our government not doing enough? Or not doing anything? I don’t know the answer.”                                                  |
|            | 4. “Solemnly says no to Hong Kong independence and violence and pays tribute to those safeguarding rule of law—in particular the police.” |
|            | 5. “If people continue to encourage violence and disregard the law, Hong Kong will go downhill, and people will live in poverty, and it will be too late to regret.” |

Sources: “Hong Kong’s richest man Li Ka-shing breaks silence on crisis: love good, violence bad,” Hong Kong Free Press, August 16, 2019, in https://www.hongkongfp.com/2019/08/16/hong-kongs-richest-man-li-ka-shing-breaks-silence-crisis-love-good-violence-bad/, access date: March 4, 2020; “Daughter of Maxim’s founder hits out again at Hong Kong protesters, saying she has lost hope in the next two generations,” South China Morning Post, November 16, 2019, in https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/politics/article/3036260/daughter-maxims-founder-hits-out-again-hong-kong-protestors, access date: March 4, 2020; “Hong Kong protests: billionaire businessman Peter Woo pleads with Hongkongers to stop the violence, warns of terrorism threat as tensions escalate,” South China Morning Post, August 12, 2019, in https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/politics/article/3022425/hong-kong-protests-billionaire-businessman-peter-woo-pleads, access date: March 4, 2020; “China has ‘many, many, many’ ways to grab fugitives, Gordon Wu says,” The Standard, July 12, 2019, in https://www.thestandard.com.hk/breaking-news/section/4/130683/China-has-‘many,-many,-many’-ways-to-grab-fugitives,-Gordon-Wu-says, access date: March 4, 2020; and “Gordon Wu rejects violence, independence in ad,” The Standard, August 19, 2019, in https://www.thestandard.com.hk/breaking-news/section/3/133177/-Gordon-Wu-rejects-violence,-independence-in-ad, access date: March 4, 2020

those young people who would be “the masters” in the future.\textsuperscript{10} Li also advertised in newspapers appealing to the people of Hong Kong to maintain harmony, but the Chinese poem he used were to open to different interpretations. Li’s position supportive of the young people, however, was not welcome by the mainland netizens, who kept on criticizing him for not “patriotic” enough toward the PRC. Unlike Li who appeared to be more pro-protesters, Annie Wu and Peter Woo tended to be far more pro-Beijing. Annie Wu’s position alienated some radical protesters who then targeted at Maxim group’s restaurants by vandalism. Gordon Wu emphasized the need for the government to tackle the wealth gap and housing inadequacy—a more pragmatic approach to viewing the protests.

\textsuperscript{10} Next Magazine, January 8, 2020, pp. 6–7.
If the views of foreign countries toward the Hong Kong protests were divided between pro-PRC and pro-protesters, a similar pattern can be seen among the Hong Kong business tycoons. However, Li Ka-shing’s relatively pro-youth, and by implication slightly pro-protesters, perspective appeared to be a tiny minority among the business elites in the HKSAR. Apart from Li Ka-shing who was sympathetic with the young people, business tycoon Joseph Lau Luen-hung, who had been involved in a five-year jail sentence in Macau, made a U-turn by dropping his legal challenge to the HKSAR government’s extradition bill in May 2019. He filed a lawsuit against the controversial bill in early April but later withdrew it on the grounds that he “loves his country and Hong Kong.”¹¹ Lau’s changing position showed that most business elites in the HKSAR adopted a positive attitude toward the extradition bill.

On April 18, 2020, the Hong Kong police arrested 15 moderate democrats for their participation in the “unlawful” assemblies in 2019 (Table 7.18). These democrats included former chairs of the Democratic Party, barrister Martin Lee, lawyer Albert Ho, lecturer Yeung Sum, former chair of Labor Party Lee Cheuk-yan, lawmaker Leung Yiu-chung, former legislator Margaret Ng and other democrats like Cyd Ho, Au Nok-hin, Richard Tsoi and Sin Chung-kai.¹² Media tycoon Jimmy Lai was arrested. The League of Social Democrats chair Raphael Wong, vice-chair Leung Kwok-hung, secretary-general Avery Ng and the Civil Human Rights Front vice-convener Figo Chan were all arrested by the police. The arrests could be seen as part of the collaborative plan of both Beijing and the HKSAR government to pursue those lawbreakers and to “terminate violence and stop chaos” in Hong Kong. The mass arrests raised the concerns of many foreign countries, including the United States and United Kingdom. The US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said that the US government condemned the arrests, and that “Beijing and its representatives in Hong Kong continue to take actions inconsistent with commitments made

¹¹ Denise Tsang, Alvin Lum and Sum Lok-kei, “Fugitive tycoon Joseph Lau withdraws legal challenge against Hong Kong’s controversial extradition bill,” South China Morning Post, May 29, 2019, in https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/politics/article/3012230/fugitive-tycoon-joseph-lau-withdraws-legal-challenge, access date: April 25, 2020.

¹² Rachel Wong, “15 Hong Kong pro-democracy figures arrested in latest police round up,” Hong Kong Free Press, April 18, 2020, in https://hongkongfp.com/2020/04/18/8-hong-kong-pro-democracy-figures-arrested-in-latest-police-round-up-party-says/, access date: April 19, 2020.
| Name             | Background                                                                 |
|------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Jimmy Lai        | A media tycoon and the owner of Next Digital Limited.                       |
| Martin Lee       | The founder and former chairman of Democratic Party.                       |
|                  | A Senior Counsel and former legislative councilor.                         |
| Margret Ng       | Member of the Civic Party.                                                 |
|                  | A barrister and former legislative councilor.                             |
| Yeung Sum        | Member and former chair of Democratic Party.                               |
|                  | A former legislative councilor.                                            |
| Albert Ho        | Member and former chair of Democratic Party.                               |
|                  | A solicitor and former legislative councilor.                             |
|                  | A lawyer who helped Edward Snowden who stayed in Hong Kong.                |
| Lee Cheuk-yan    | Former chairman of the Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic and       |
|                  | Democratic Movements in China.                                             |
|                  | A labor activist and the founding member of the Labor Party.               |
|                  | A former legislative councilor.                                            |
| Leung Kwok-hung  | Vice-chairman of League of Social Democrats.                               |
| Richard Tsoi     | Former legislative councilor.                                              |
| Cyd Ho           | Member of the Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic and Democratic    |
|                  | Movements in China.                                                        |
| Au Nok-hin       | Founding member of the Labor Party.                                        |
|                  | A former legislative councilor.                                            |
| Raphael Wong     | An activist who participates in social movements.                          |
| Figo Chan        | Member of the League of Social Democrats.                                  |
|                  | Chairman of the League of Social Democrats.                                |
| Avery Ng         | Deputy convener of the Civil Human Rights Front.                          |
| Sin Chung-kai    | Former chairman of the League of Social Democrats.                         |
|                  | Member of Democratic Party.                                                |
|                  | A former legislative councilor.                                            |
| Leung Yiu-chung  | A labor activist who formed the Neighborhood and Worker’s Service Centre.  |
| Sources: Rachel Wong, “15 Hong Kong pro-democracy figures arrested in latest police round up,” Hong Kong Free Press, April 18, 2020, in: https://hongkongfp.com/2020/04/18/8-hong-kong-pro-democracy-figures-arrested-in-latest-police-round-up-party-says/, access date: April 19, 2020
under the Sino-British Joint Declaration that include transparency, the rule of law, and guarantees that Hong Kong will continue to ‘enjoy a high degree of autonomy.’” The UK government said that it expected the trial to be conducted in a fair and transparent manner. Nevertheless, since President Xi Jinping became the CCP party-secretary in November 2012, his subordinates responsible for Hong Kong matters have virtually abandoned any talk about the Sino-British Joint Declaration. As such, the US demand for China to stick to the promises in the Sino-British Joint Declaration is increasingly futile. The rise of China economically, politically and militarily has meant that its policy toward the HKSAR has to guard against and ward off any foreign intervention. Hence, even though foreign countries like the United States and United Kingdom expressed their concerns about the mass arrests on April 18, 2020, the reality is that the Hong Kong police is now directly accountable to the Ministry of Public Security in Beijing. The hard-line approach to dealing with the protest leaders, regardless of whether they were moderate democrats or not, has been adopted by the Hong Kong police and the HKSAR government in conformity with Beijing’s policy directive of “terminating violence and stopping chaos” in Hong Kong.

CONCLUSION

This chapter argued that the battles of the CUHK and PolyU were the two final but critical battles leading to the surprisingly landslide electoral victory of the democrats in the 2019 District Council elections. The battle of the PolyU could be seen as the result of a strategic error of protesters who abandoned the traditionally adaptable and flexible tactic of “be water.” However, their failure to defend the PolyU was compensated by the pan-democratic victory in district elections, which had a significant political function of allowing both pro-government and anti-government voters to express their preferences through ballot boxes. Since the onset of the Coronavirus in January 2020, the anti-police and anti-mainlandization protests have subsided temporarily. The police, on the other hand, have hardened their approaches and tactics since the new Police Commissioner Chris Tang was appointed. More arrests were made quickly in all the recent protests, serving as the deterrent against the spread of protests in the HKSAR. On the other hand, with the deteriorating battles between protesters and police, the US Congress passed the US Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act, trying to protect the progress of Hong Kong’s

13 “US and UK condemn arrest of Hong Kong democracy activists,” Reuters, April 19, 2020, in https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/apr/19/us-and-uk-condemn-arrest-of-hong-kong-democracy-activists, access date: April 19, 2020.
democratic development and boosting the morale of Hong Kong protesters. However, the PRC saw the US move as transgressing into its internal affairs. Similarly, Taiwan was an American ally which provided a sanctuary to some radical protesters in Hong Kong, while its political leaders across the ideological spectrum criticized the Hong Kong model of “one country, two systems.” Taiwan’s presidential election in January 2020 witnessed the easy victory of the DPP under the leadership of Tsai Ing-wen. As such, the entire protests in the HKSAR from June to December 2019 turned out to be an electoral campaign in favor of the Taiwan DPP, thereby defeating the purpose of Beijing’s attempt at using Hong Kong as a means to conduct united front work on the ROC. Nevertheless, the pro-democracy victory in the November 2019 district elections did not mean that both Beijing and the HKSAR government abandoned their hardline policy toward protesters, both peaceful and violent. The mass arrests of moderate democrats on April 18, 2020, proved that both Beijing and the HKSAR authorities have continued to maintain the hardline policy toward protest leaders.