

CHINA

Hong Kong Protesters to Trump: We're Not Done Yet

Waving U.S. flags, many continue hoping outsiders can help influence China policy makers



Protesters in Hong Kong Saturday PHOTO: KIN CHEUNG/ASSOCIATED PRESS

By Mike Cherney and Rachel Yeo

Oct. 12, 2019 9:14 am ET

HONG KONG—Thousands of antigovernment protesters in Hong Kong marched from a historic clock tower through a shopping district lined with luxury stores on Saturday, in a demonstration that some hoped would show President Trump the movement still has momentum.

After a meeting with China's vice premier at the White House on Friday, Mr. Trump said the protests have "toned down a lot" and that "great progress has been made by China in Hong Kong." He added that the situation is "going to take care of itself."

The demonstration on Saturday, the 19th week of unrest in the semiautonomous Chinese city, appeared smaller than some of the biggest gatherings earlier in the year. But some protesters attributed the appearance of declining attendance at recent rallies to a shift in tactics, with smaller groups of activists seeking to create unrest in multiple locations rather than one big assembly.

Many of the marchers on Saturday were peaceful, but some protesters sprayed graffiti or smashed windows at Chinese banks, government buildings and other stores considered to be pro-Beijing. Around 3 p.m., police said protesters threw petrol bombs inside a subway station, though no one was injured. A fire was set at government offices later in the afternoon, police said.

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Although Hong Kong's government has pledged to withdraw an extradition law that triggered the mass street protests in early June, the

demonstrations have morphed into a broader call for democratic reform and for an independent inquiry into the conduct of police. During the rallies, some protesters have waved flags from the U.S. and other democratic nations to attract international support, presenting a challenge to the Trump administration as it seeks to negotiate a trade deal with Beijing.

"Trump is a 100% businessman... What he wants is the money, to have a trade deal," said protester Joseph Cheung, 68, as he waited near the clock tower for Saturday's march to start. He said it would be nice to get more U.S. support but that it's OK if the U.S. can't help further. "We want to fight for ourselves," he said.

A 22-year-old protester who gave his name as Eric, said he was carrying a U.S. flag for the first time at a rally and was disappointed with Mr. Trump's comments. But he said it is hard to predict what Mr. Trump will do and understood that the president needs to do what is best for American citizens, not necessarily Hong Kong.

He still hoped to get support from Congress, which is expected to vote on the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act soon. Many protesters have supported the act, which would require the secretary of state to certify annually whether Hong Kong continues to deserve special treatment that has helped the city thrive as a business center.

"We will still come out here swinging the American flag to let him know he is wrong," said another protester, 29, referring to Mr. Trump. He said many people still want to get U.S. support.

Eric Ho, a 24-year-old teacher, said he wasn't putting too much weight on Mr. Trump's comments and that he wasn't angry. He said Mr. Trump is probably just using Hong Kong as a bargaining chip to get a better trade deal with China.

“We will just do our best and I believe Americans with a sense of the American spirit that believe in freedom and democracy will understand and support us,” Mr. Ho said.

—*Natasha Khan contributed to this article.*

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