

Speech at the FCC

as given by Andy Chan Ho-Tin, Convenor of Hong Kong National Party
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Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. If I may first thank the FCC for having me here today despite all the challenges you must've faced - personally, in these past few weeks, I myself and people around me have been subject to a level of physical surveillance I've never experienced before. So I really do appreciate that the FCC stood by their decision to host this talk.

The Hong Kong National Party - it all started in 2016, when my friends and I founded what was truly the first political party that had "Hong Kong independence" clearly stated as one of its central goals. Due to the nature of how the Chinese propaganda machine works, the National Party was instantly demonised as some sort of extremist group due to this single word: "independence". In reality, what the National Party is chasing after is no different from what many Hong Kongers wish for: the dream of democracy, here, in our home, Hong Kong.

What is different is how much people wish to face the truth: the truth that a democracy is nothing if final, ultimate power does not rest with the people. In political terms, the National Party understands that, if Hong Kong were to become truly democratic, Hong Kong's sovereignty must rest with the people of Hong Kong. And there is only one way to achieve this: independence. Thus we saw it our duty to help form a "national consciousness" for Hong Kong, and to that end, the first big thing we did was to run for the LegCo election, in 2016. The government, as you all know, reacted with such over-reaction that I was disqualified before the voting even began! And all of this, of course, was done with "administrative procedures", which allowed the government to cunningly deny me my constitutional rights via so-called "legal" means. After this, the National Party went on to strive for our goal by other ways: educational programmes for students, flyerings, rallies - all was done to arouse Hong Kong's "national consciousness", in defence against what is effectively our current colonial rule under the Chinese.

The Hong Kong National Party has faced political oppression numerous times after the LegCo disqualification. We tried to register as a company, and was rejected. We tried to set up a stall in the Lunar New Year Night Market, and was rejected as well. We even had the honour to receive the first ever "Letter Prohibiting Assembly" from the Police since 1997. And now, as you all know, the government is trying to shut us down completely, calling us an "illegal society". Time and again, our government has shown that whatever "freedom" or "democracy" they claim to be upholding are but Communist mirages - lofty words that Peking only finds useful in deceiving you, the foreign press, and not actually allowing them to the people of Hong Kong.

The situation is so dire that we dare say Hong Kong has never experienced such horrid colonialism until 1997. Peking is now our colonial masters, and the Hong Kong National Party has a real need to exist.

The nature of China is oppression. At its heart, the empire that existed in the 18th century still stands today, despite all its technological advances. China is not a modern nation state, much less a civic society. China is a large empire, and for centuries she has always operated on the principle of centralised power. For this, all its dominions must be forced to assimilate, and to follow the party line, lest any differences challenge the central authority. All is well under this system if you were part of those who don't need assimilating, but if you happen to be born into one of these national identities that are markedly different, then all is lost. Look at East Turkestan; look at Tibet. Nations forced to follow, or face the penalty of death. Even worse, you get sent to one of these re-education camps, where dying is better than living. Of course, these camps have not appeared here yet, but the will of China is the same: if you're different, you're wrong. The same now happens to Taiwan, and here, to Hong Kong.

Peking likes to say that the People's Republic of China is a nation state, and that there is a national people called "Zhonghua Minzu", or the "Chinese race", a fabricated idea to serve the political needs of an empire. Within this umbrella, and with the ambiguity of the Chinese language with regards to nations and races, Peking would claim that everyone, from the Tibetans and Mongolians, to the Shanghaiese, the Taiwanese, the Hong Kongese, and even to the Chinese diaspora in the US, the UK, Australia... you name it. All of that, Peking claims to be part of the "Zhonghua" race, and therefore, by their logic, loyal subjects to whoever controls the seat of Peking. To the educated this would sound absurd, but it is the official party line from Peking. They would claim this is a form of nationalism, and that China is a nation state, when in reality all that Peking has is imperialism. All people around the world who have dealings with China should understand this: China is, by its nature as an empire, a threat to all free peoples in the world. Already have we seen Peking betraying the Seventeen Point Agreement with Tibet; already have we seen Peking betraying its promises when joining the WTO; and already have we seen Peking betraying the Sino-British Joint Declaration, leaving us Hong Kongers with less and less freedoms. In the past 21 years, Hong Kong has progressed in only one direction: backwards. Not only have we failed to attain truly democratic elections, we are also marching ever closer to a dictatorship with Chinese characteristics. Hong Kong, being a financial centre, tasted China's forced assimilation first via our economy. Chinese capital was allowed to flood Hong Kong, in particular industries that our daily lives depend on: think infrastructure, think catering, think the media. The second step was the ideological and the cultural, and that, to all who dared to pay attention, is already underway. Our first Chief Executive, Tung Chee-Hwa, resigned after trying and failing to push the National Security Bill, based on the infamous Article 23. Hong Kong's consensus back in 2003 was that China's interpretation of what constitutes secession and subversion was simply wrong. China thinks that simply talking about subversion is already subversion, or even worse, it only takes a single official thinking you're thinking about secession, then you're a traitor, and should be arrested. Soon, with China's improvements in AI and surveillance technology, the plot of Minority Report might turn to reality. The tragedy we are all now witnessing is that while Article 23 has not yet been implemented in law, its effects are already here. The Hong Kong National Party experienced this first-hand. Simply saying you are pro-independence is somehow the same as committing treason, according to some. And the sad

thing is that, by now, many HongKongers have changed - we were still fighting back Article 23 in 2003, but in 2018, many are now afraid to speak up. There is, in other words, no longer freedom of speech in Hong Kong, but instead the freedom to think and say whatever Peking wants us to. Hong Kong is no longer that much different from China, and the international community have to acknowledge that. Unhappy with just subverting Hong Kong using money and ideology, China is also sending its loyal subjects here - 150 of them, everyday, via the One-way Permit scheme. Normally, immigration done right gives the host society immense benefits, but the way that the Chinese Hong Kong government handles it is nothing short of a political decision, designed to destroy all that we hold dear. Local communities were shattered, because of the rapid influx of an incompatible culture. Our medical resources were stretched to its limits, with our own mothers struggling to find a single bed to give birth in. The labour market was flooded with people who are happy to take wages far below the normal point. Our very living space is taken from us. Even our language, the words that shape our thoughts, are being demonised. Per China's orders, Hong Kong's future generations will now abandon Cantonese and switch entirely to Mandarin. There are those still in the education sector who oppose this, but the arm of Peking is ever unrelenting. It will not be a matter of if, but of when, when one day we wake up and ask ourselves, "Why are my children and grandchildren valuing obedience to the state above all else; where is democracy; where is freedom; where is tolerance; and where is the Hong Kong that we knew?" Today, Hong Kong faces "national cleansing" from China, and there are those among us who refuse to bow down, who refuse to become a forgotten footnote in history.

The matter of Hong Kong Independence is both a political and an ethical one. In the span of 170-ish years, since Hong Kong opened as a port in 1841, and until 1997, Hong Kong has developed its own unique culture, history, way of living, and religious beliefs. Shielded by the Brits, Hong Kong was spared the anti-intellectual destruction that Communist China imposed upon itself. There was no Cultural Revolution in Hong Kong, and the society we have here is built upon reason and morals. Just as there is no freedom of speech in China, and the society they have there is built upon fear and obedience. The difference between us in the South and them in the North is far beyond just geographical distance. It is a matter of cultural values, and of civilisation. To this day China is still essentially a closed, inwards-looking, and authoritarian society, with many national peoples being forced to obey. By virtue of its historical, geographical, and cultural uniqueness, Hong Kong is truly a separate entity from the so-called "Chinese nation". We are our own, and sadly, we are a nation that is quickly being annexed and destroyed by China. The cry for Hong Kong's Independence is therefore a cry against colonial invasion. It is an ethical cry for liberation, and it is a political cry for our own continued existence. We were once colonised by the Brits, and now we are by the Chinese. Where is our right to determine our own future as a national people?

The government trying to ban our operations did not come as surprise to us in the National Party. Ever since our companies registration ban and our election disqualification, all of our activities faced degrees of physical opposition and surveillance. From the very beginning, the government has decided to rid us of our freedoms, if not more. Our Party is not the first victim, and it will not be the last. Those who come after us will do well to prepare themselves for more to come. The Police and the Security Bureau have very kindly compiled a 700-pages long document as "evidence" for banning our Party. Since we're here at the FCC I'm going to assume

you've at least skimmed the the PDFs we've uploaded. And I'm sure you've laughed as well after reading them. The hundred upon hundred pages of so-called "evidence" are mostly just screenshots of our Party's Facebook Page! It's frankly absurd how these government elites could imagine some paragraphs on the Internet and my own sayings on a radio show could constitute "a threat to national security". Imagine the insecurity!

All that we've done, the Party and myself, are all protected within the International Human Rights Law. The legal clause that our government used, the Societies Ordinance, is a relic left behind since the British Colonial days. What better law than this! Our Chinese colonial masters are unironically happy to tell us all that, yes, they are colonising Hong Kong, and yes, Hong Kong's freedoms are just for show.

If the idea of "One Country, Two Systems" were to really work, none of the above would've happened. That they did is conclusive proof that there is only "One Empire, and One System". China has turned its back on the Sino-British Joint Declaration, and the UK, as a co-signatory, must act on this. This is Britain's inescapable duty, as a nation of honour and democracy, to stand up against such atrocities. Hong Kong's rights and freedoms will soon be all gone, and all will be too late by then.

The events thus far has also proven that the unique position of Hong Kong is now lost. Whatever Western values we had are now replaced by ideologies from Communist China. The Hong Kong government now serves not the interests of the Hong Kong people, nor those who have dealings with us, but only the interests alone of Peking. Countries and nations all around the world need to understand this, and act accordingly. The US, in particular, should review the conditions set out in the United States-Hong Kong Policy Act, and start sanctioning those Hong Kong government officials who trampled on our human rights. The incentives here extend far beyond the ethical. Think about how much more clout the US would have on China if the current trade war extended to Hong Kong. Many of the Chinese already store their actual capital here. If the US truly wish to deal an economic blow to China, the US-HK Policy Act should not be overlooked.

The Hong Kong National Party hopes that the international community can, like the US, objectively review the imperialistic threat that is coming from China. You may not have tasted its sting yet, but those of us who are stuck next to China's expansionist borders may soon be no more. Hong Kong now faces ethical and cultural challenges from the North - who knows when such challenges turn into the humanitarian kind. International aid must come, and come quickly. Fortune is running out, and I don't say this as Convenor of the Hong Kong National Party, but as Andy Chan, a surviving Hong Konger.