

**HONG KONG'S ANTI-EXTRADITION
BILL PROTESTS: THE ORIGINS,
FEATURES AND INTERPRETATIONS**

LIM Tai Wei

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Executive Summary

1. For the Hong Kong government, the extradition bill was meant to serve justice to criminals that had fled to Hong Kong. Under tremendous public pressure, Chief Executive Carrie Lam declared the extradition bill as ‘dead’ on 9 July 2019. However, the protests continued due to deep mistrust of the administration, particularly with the use of the word ‘dead’, a non-legislative term.
2. The Taiwanese authorities denied that they had a role in the extradition bill and did not support the Hong Kong government’s explanation that this was done in the interest of justice. They have withdrawn their extradition request to bring Chan to Taiwan under such circumstances.
3. Protest organisers made selective use of technology to avoid detection and social media for mass mobilisation. At its peak, more than two million people reportedly took to the streets.
4. On 15 June 2019, a protester who scaled a building to put up an anti-extradition banner fell to his death, quickly becoming a symbolic icon of the anti-extradition bill protests.
5. The Chinese ambassador to the United Kingdom and mainland Chinese media indicated that more than 800,000 people expressed support for the extradition bill through an internet-based movement, alongside advocates on the streets gathering signatures of support.
6. The Hong Kong protests are entering their 12th week at the point of this writing. The protests appear to show no signs of subsiding, but some elderly citizens and mainstream citizens are indicating their disapproval. The protesters at one point even had to apologise for inconveniencing airport passengers.
7. The People’s Armed Police (PAP) has now moved 25 km north of Hong Kong and is carrying out exercises near a stadium. US President Trump has indicated that his

intelligence shows an amassing of troops near the border. It remains to be seen whether the troops, armed militia or police will be deployed to Hong Kong.

8. If the violence continues and if what “terrorist-like” or “terrorist” acts as termed by Chinese authorities continue and intensify, the PAP may be deployed. The protesters and Chinese authorities are now engaged in a linguistic battle on the term “terrorism”.
9. The Hong Kong economy is severely affected, necessitating a stimulus package of S\$3.4 billion to jump-start the flagging economy. Skilled and talented expatriates and funds are flowing out of Hong Kong to Singapore, Tokyo and other politically stable first-tier East Asian cities while Hong Kongers are arranging for migration overseas. All parties appear to vote with their feet in the aftermath of the protests.
10. The ‘One Country, Two Systems’ is conceptually in limbo as millions of Hong Kongers are showing their dissatisfaction with the political arrangement and as the Taiwanese are watching on with great sympathy. The Taiwanese government has also offered amnesty for Hong Kong protesters.
11. Hong Kong students overseas had also clashed with patriotic mainland Chinese students in Australia and chilled the atmosphere in the United States and New Zealand. The polarisation of Hong Kong has effectively now become internationalised with students taking up the political causes overseas.