

Hongkong “Fluid Occupiers” and Beijing willingness to control the 2017 election

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China Will Let Hong Kongers Vote for Their Next Leader — But Only If a Pro-Beijing Committee Selects the Candidates

For pro-democracy activists in Hong Kong, China’s promise to let the people have a say in the election of the city’s next top leader is looking rather hollow.

The standing committee of China’s National People Representative Conference (NPC) announced on August 31 that candidates for the 2017 election of Hong Kong’s chief executive must obtain at least 50 percent support from a nominating committee. That nominating committee will be formed just like the current chief executive selection committee, meaning the majority of the members will be pro-Beijing.

China promised Hong Kong, a former British colony that enjoys a certain level of autonomy from the mainland as a special administrative region, a direct vote in 2017 instead of election via the 1,200-member committee. But having only pro-Beijing tickets to choose from defeats the purpose of an election, pro-democracy activists say.

Committees packed with “patriot” members have smothered pro-democracy candidate’s chances in the past. The majority of the current chief executive committee selection committee members come from pro-Beijing civic groups, either directly nominated by the organizations or elected within a small circles of some 20 companies or individual voters. In the 2012 selection of the chief executive, pro-democracy candidate Albert Ho only managed to get 188 nominations (less than 16 percent) and 76 votes (less than 7 percent) from the members.

The NPC, which met for a week in the mainland capital, also ruled the number of candidates will be restricted to two or three.

Protest group Occupy Central with Love and Peace (OCLP), which has said it will hold a massive sit-in in Hong Kong’s financial district if Hong Kongers aren’t allowed to choose the candidates, organized a public assembly outside the Hong Kong government building attended by hundreds in response.

The group said in a press release that the NPC’s decision dashed people’s hopes for change and will intensify societal conflicts. More than 500 members were arrested earlier this summer at a rehearsal sit-in for Occupy Central following a rally of a half a million people on July 1, a day that traditionally sees pro-democracy demonstrations.

Organizers urged in their assembly statement:

Translation Original Quote

"What remains in the system is authoritative power; there is no space for reasoning. We urge all Hong Kong citizens to stand up and speak out. The fact that they refuse to hear us does not mean

that we don't exist.

The act of civil disobedience is about to take place and it won't end as a single action. The suppressive ruler has to confront an era of massive public disobedience.

Please call upon citizens who belong to this era to the assembly and have them bring any material that can make a sound, ring the warning siren throughout the city; declare battle.

The wind has blown. We have to continue down our path with courage."

As students' summer break ends the first week of September in Hong Kong, the Federation of University Student Unions called for a student strike when the new semester started:

Translation Original Quote

"[...] For students, boycotting classes is our act of disobedience.

We study in the university to improve our lives and society. Yet, our living space has been shrinking and our society is sick. The collusion of government and corporations, in particular in the property development sector, is destructive to our society. We can't change our fate by focusing on our study. What we need now is to suspend our daily routine and learn from our society. We have to ask ourselves, what do we want for our society and then act together with those who care to realize our dream.

[...] If you don't want to see our future being determined by the privileged ruling class, we have to step out and join citizens' disobedience — resistance to paying tax, boycott of classes, workers' strike, market strike. We have to turn a new page for our struggle."

Beijing's framework for the 2017 election not only imposes a high threshold for the candidate, but also leaves no room for the democratization of nominating committee. All candidates would be pre-selected, undermining Hong Kong's long-awaited universal suffrage.

The framework also leaves almost no room for further negotiation, so pro-democracy legislators will likely exercise their veto power in Hong Kong's legislative council on the government's political reform proposal on universal suffrage. The Hong Kong government will table an official draft on the arrangement of the 2016 election of the legislative council and the 2017 election of the chief executive early next year.

To explain to Hong Kongers why it matters to vote down "fake" universal suffrage, a group calling themselves Fluid Occupiers [1] have begun offering rotten oranges to passersby. The political demonstration spoofs a government advertisement asking Hong Kong's people "to accept whatever is available." Are you willing "to eat whatever is available?" the Fluid Occupiers ask.

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P.S.

* From Global Voices. Posted 31 August 2014 22:57 GMT :
<http://globalvoicesonline.org/2014/08/31/china-national-people-representative-conference-framework>

[-nomination-hong-kong-chief-executive/](#)

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Footnotes

[1] <https://www.facebook.com/FluidOccupiers/timeline#>