

Hong Kong protesters target Beijing-friendly businesses in latest demonstrations

Monday 23 September 2019, by [McLAUGHLIN Timothy](#), [QUACKENBUSH Casey](#) (Date first published: 22 September 2019).

Protesters marched through shopping malls in Hong Kong on Sunday 22, targeting businesses with connections to China — or those perceived to be pro-Beijing — as demonstrations in the city stretched into their 16th weekend.

The new tactic showed a simmering anger toward the city's business elites, a relatively small group of tycoons and cronies who have accumulated enormous wealth and political clout, often through cozy relationships with the mainland.

The contentious extradition bill that sparked the ongoing political crisis was withdrawn earlier this month, but Sunday's demonstrations showed again that the deep unhappiness within the city goes far beyond a single piece of legislation and will not be easily — or quickly — resolved.

Hundreds of protesters gathered at New Town Plaza, a multistory shopping mall in the Sha Tin district. They targeted Chinese-linked businesses such as Maxim's Jade Garden restaurant, flooding the automated reservation system with requests and taping the receipts together to create an ad hoc protest banner.

Maxim's Caterers, the food and beverage conglomerate that operates Jade Garden, runs restaurants and bakeries across Hong Kong, including the Seattle-based coffee chain Starbucks. Protesters have targeted the company because its founder's daughter, Annie Wu, has been a staunch public supporter of Beijing. She spoke in defense of the Hong Kong government this month before the United Nations.

Tiffany, 25, a kindergarten teacher, said Wu was "bending all of the reasons why we come out to the streets. She only sees what the protesters destroy, but she doesn't see the reasons why."

Tiffany and other demonstrators declined to give their last names out of fear of repercussions from participating in protests not approved by police.

Peter, 31, a photographer, said Wu "doesn't understand what's happening in Hong Kong. She said [the demonstrations] are destroying peaceful life in Hong Kong. Does she really know what's happening here?"

Wu spoke before the U.N. Human Rights Council in Geneva with Pansy Ho, a casino heiress who said protesters had "hijacked the well-intended bill and used it to spread fear among Hong Kongers." That prompted ridicule from demonstrators, who said Ho, whose worth Forbes pegs at \$4.3 billion, was grossly disconnected from the people.

At V Walk, a shopping mall in the Sham Shui Po area of Kowloon, dozens of protesters marched past stores chanting "liberate Hong Kong, revolution of our time." The group laid siege to a Best Mart 360 convenience store, part of a chain owned by someone with deep ties to the southeastern Chinese province of Fujian. The shop closed, and protesters let out a victorious roar before they quickly

moved along.

A protester in a black mask said she learned of the demonstration on Instagram.

“We have to fight in different ways,” said the woman, in her 30s. “We have used a lot of methods already. Occupying shopping malls is a new one.”

By evening, in what has been a recurring pattern in the weekend protests, demonstrations that began peacefully turned violent. Police fired tear gas, and protesters hurled bricks at officers in the streets surrounding New Town Plaza. Flaming piles of palm fronds and cardboard sent plumes of black smoke into the sky.

Skirmishes with police continued into Sunday 22 night. Protesters again gathered around the Mong Kok police station, a frequent site of confrontations, and jeered police officers. Several stops on the city’s subway station were closed.

Plans to disrupt transportation links to Hong Kong International Airport, one of the world’s busiest, had circulated on social media and messaging apps in recent days. Protesters targeted the airport on previous weekends and have been successful in causing flight delays and cancellations.

But on Sunday 22, authorities deployed dozens of riot police to the main train station servicing the airport as a precaution. Officers in green fatigues, some carrying shotguns and tear gas launchers, stood in groups throughout the station.

Authorities reduced rail and bus service to the airport in an attempt to stop large numbers of protesters from making it there. That appeared to thwart the protesters’ plans, but many counted it a victory that police deployed such a huge amount of resources only to have demonstrations pop up elsewhere.

The protests capped yet another weekend of unrest in the semiautonomous territory that has been in tumult for months. The unrest started over a the bill that would have allowed extraditions to mainland China.

Carrie Lam, Hong Kong’s deeply unpopular chief executive, withdrew the bill this month. By then, the scope of the protests had broadened dramatically to include Beijing’s tightening hold on Hong Kong and the use of force by police. Nearly 1,500 people — as young as 12 and as old as 83 — have been arrested since June, according to police.

Police and protesters also clashed on Saturday 21. Police said they didn’t know the number arrested. At least one 13-year-old girl was detained in connection with the burning of the Chinese national flag. Police said Sunday evening she had been granted bail.

Protesters frequently target the flag and other Chinese symbols. They have popularized the term “Chinazi”; stickers with the word, some with swastikas, were plastered around New Town Plaza on Sunday. Protesters formed a conga line in the middle of the mall to dance gleefully on a Chinese flag.

Police condemned protesters who they said attacked an officer Saturday and attempted to “snatch” his revolver. This was an apparent reference to a scene captured by public broadcaster Radio Television Hong Kong, which showed a half-dozen protesters attempting to free a demonstrator who had been caught by police.

The group beat the officer with rods and umbrellas. One protester grabbed the officer’s baton and

used it to repeatedly hit the officer. Another protester pulled at the officer's weapon but was unable to free it before being chased by other officers.

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https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/hong-kong-protesters-target-beijing-friendly-businesses-in-latest-demonstration/2019/09/22/d3a7de76-dd1b-11e9-be96-6adb81821e90_story.html