

Timothy Lemmer  
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The Wall Street Journal  
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Dear Mr Lemmer,

I refer to your editorial (“China’s Hong Kong Roundup”, April 19) concerning the implementation of “one country, two systems’ and the Basic Law in Hong Kong.

Arrests last weekend of certain figures for taking part in unauthorised assemblies were made by Hong Kong authorities in accordance with Hong Kong law. In Hong Kong, everyone is equal before the law. Cases will not be handled any differently owing to the political beliefs or background of the persons involved.

Recent comments by the Central People’s Government (CPG) Liaison Office in Hong Kong on the operation of the Legislative Council should be seen from the perspective of the constitutional setup of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR). As a special administrative region of China, the HKSAR enjoys a high degree of autonomy and comes directly under the CPG according to Article 12 of the Basic Law. The concerns expressed about the failure of the House Committee of our Legislative Council to elect its Chairman after 15 meetings over the past six months are legitimate from the perspectives of our constitution, governance and operation, and are in full compliance with our constitutional order under "one country, two systems".

It is also factually incorrect to state that last year’s proposed changes to Hong Kong’s extradition law “would have allowed Beijing to extradite anyone in Hong Kong to the Mainland”. It is relevant to note that under the extradition proposals which have been withdrawn, only crimes of the most serious nature (carrying a sentence of at least 7 years’ jail) and which were crimes in both jurisdictions would have been considered. In addition, any such cases were also subject to judicial appeal at different stages of the process while crimes of a political nature, or relating to freedom of expression, would not be covered.

Sincerely,  
Eddie Mak  
Hong Kong Commissioner to the United States of America