

The *Occupy Central with Love and Peace* movement has shocked and scared the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) with its suddenness and its huge level of support.

The movement was organized earlier this year to lead civil disobedience in Hong Kong should universal suffrage not be forthcoming. It began staging events in an attempt to involve more Hong Kongers in protests for universal suffrage.

When Beijing announced this week that the principle of universal suffrage would not be adhered to and that Beijing would allow only its own candidates in the 2017 'elections', the organizers of *Occupy Central* decided to move their protests—scheduled for early October—to last Sunday. By Sunday night, tens of thousands were crammed into the protest site.

The heavy handed police tactics which included the use of tear gas, pepper spray and reported beatings, backfired on the regime as more people joined the protest, which has now been dubbed the 'umbrella revolution' in reference to the umbrellas carried by protesters to ward off tear gas and pepper spray attacks, and which also serves to shelter them from the fierce sun.

Crowds of 80,000 or more have basically brought the city to a standstill and the organisers plan to continue past the Chinese National Day (October 1) and beyond.

The CCP is desperately trying to block news of the protests from reaching the mainland, as it fears that its illegitimate rule will be threatened if mainlanders campaign for democracy, however, it is fighting a losing battle despite its censorship of the internet.

Beijing has backed itself into a corner, and will find it hard to back down or compromise due to its recent hardline rhetoric. If the protesters themselves do not back down, it is entirely possible that the regime will use its People's Liberation Army (PLA) garrison in Hong Kong to do whatever it takes to clear the streets.

The world is watching.