

Hong Kong used to be a model city, representing the height of those values that a modern civilization treasures: freedom of speech, respect for human rights, and adherence to the rule of law. It was never a place for hate crimes.

However, in the past few years, developments in Hong Kong have led people to wonder whether, and to what extent, it has gone backward under Beijing's Communist rule.

The most recent controversy came about when a pro-Communist Hong Kong legislator and lawmaker Junius Ho Kwan-yiu (何俊仁) recommended that anyone who advocates Hong Kong independence should be "killed without mercy" ("殺無赦"). Ho is a former president of the Law Society in Hong Kong.

Before getting into the details, we want to be clear about the record. Though Beijing and many of its loyal politicians in Hong Kong have strongly denounced Hong Kong independence, independent media argue that a sizeable, or even a significant "Hong Kong independence force" does not seem to exist; nor was there ever a significant "Hong Kong independence movement."

There have indeed been more protests in Hong Kong recently, including the "Occupy Central" movement in 2015, because the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has made some drastic policy changes in Hong Kong. The public appealed to the Central government to honor the Basic Law that the CCP promised to follow when it took over Hong Kong in 1997. They wanted Beijing to give Hong Kongese true democracy and freedom, but they did not seek the actual separation of Hong Kong from China.

'Killing without mercy'

Thus, many people question whether "Hong Kong independence" may just be a fictitious proposition that the CCP created for its own convenience so it could label people and exercise control over Hong Kong's existing freedom of speech.

The South China Morning Post had a detailed report on Junius Ho's "killing without mercy" story. {1}

On September 17, 2017, a pro-Beijing gathering took place in the Tamar Park in Hong Kong, to pressure the University of Hong Kong to dismiss its Associate Professor of Law, Benny Tai Yiu-ting (戴耀庭). Benny Tai was a co-founder of "Occupy Central."

During the rally, Yuen Long district councilor Tsang Shu-wo (鄧樹培) warned on stage that no one should advocate Hong Kong's independence from China: "If he advocates Hong Kong independence, he's not Chinese; he is an outsider and must be killed."

In response, Junius Ho, who was among a group of pro-Beijing activists standing with Tsang on the stage, chanted: "(Kill) without mercy!"

After the rally, the media interviewed Ho on his "killing without mercy" statement.

"If Hong Kong independence advocates are subverting the fate of a country... why not kill them?" Ho asked.

"To kill them without mercy' means we deplore wrongdoers like our enemies."

Cultural revolution style

The pan-democrats found Ho's remarks to be contrary to Hong Kong's existing values. They felt it was not a proper statement in a democratic society, but rather the CCP's Cultural Revolution-style denunciation and a means of spreading a hate message.

In a statement, 22 pan-democratic lawmakers said Ho had "gone beyond the bottom line of freedom of speech and morals." "We strongly reprimand his cold-blooded speech, as it advocated direct violence and allegedly broke the law."

The pan-democrats added that according to the Public Order Ordinance, it is a criminal offence for any person to "use threatening, abusive or insulting words" in public with the intent to provoke a breach of the peace. It is also a criminal offence for anyone to make any public statement "which is likely to incite or induce any person to kill or do physical injury to anyone else."

Hong Kong's Secretary for Justice Rimsky Yuen Kwok-keung (袁國強) tried to downplay Ho's statements.

"(S)peaking in general... we need to look from the overall (perspective) in deciding whether a particular remark has breached the criminal law." "We need to consider the meaning behind a word or phrase, and the court would consider the background too."

This led the pan-democrats to conclude that the Hong Kong government was applying a double standard.

When the government retook the three "Occupy Central" student leaders to court in August, the court Judge questioned them for provoking violence. The Judge accused them of using the term "收回公民廣場" ("Re-seize the Citizen Square") and saying that the word "收" ("seize") itself is related to violence. {2}

Putting aside whether the Judge's argument is nonsensical or full of logical wisdom, if we simply follow the example the judge used, the word "seize" is related to violence and therefore the

person's use of this word involves promoting violence. Then when a person talks about "killing," isn't that person advocating killing? Isn't "killing" an even greater violence than "seizing"?

How about when a person said "kill with mercy"? Isn't that much worse?

Party, not law, decides guilty

Hong Kong is changing. What is happening there now is not something people will normally see in a civilized democratic environment that follows the rule of law. It is changing into a typical CCP controlled society where the Party (and not the law) decides who is guilty and who is not.

Twenty years ago, when China took over Hong Kong from the British, China announced that it would follow the "One Country, Two Systems" structure and the Basic Law for 50 years (until 2047) with no change. Now twenty years later, the Communist regime is re-defining the Basic Law and speeding up the "One Country, One System" conversion.

Wu Chi-wai, the Chairman of the Democratic Party in Hong Kong said at a forum on June 11, 2017, amid the twentieth anniversary of Hong Kong's return to China:

"From the 2014 (Beijing's) People's Congress' whitepaper on implementing the 'One Country, Two Systems' in Hong Kong to the speech that Zhang Dejiang (Chairman of the People's Congress) gave recently, you can see that the central government has a general goal: to use a series of approaches to effect the gradual conversion of the hidden powers (of the central government), as defined in the Basic Law, into truly effective, clear, standardized, and enforceable powers (for the central government to implement). This is having a big impact on (the principles of) 'One Country, Two Systems' that 'Hong Kongese rely on to manage Hong Kong' and its 'High-degree of self-determination.'"

Wu pointed out that then Hong Kong's Chief Executive C.Y. Leung has long been claiming a severe "Hong Kong Independence" issue. This has given the Communist Regime in China an excuse to interfere in Hong Kong's internal affairs. {3}

Junius Ho's "killing without mercy" statement proves that Wu's concern is not without merit.

Endnotes:

{1} *South China Morning Post*, "Pan-democrats blast Junius Ho for saying independence activists should be 'killed mercilessly,'" September 19, 2017.

<http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/politics/article/2111718/pan-democrats-blast-junius-ho-s-aying-independence-activists>.

{2} *Singtao Daily USA*, "Go to the Citizen Square without Permit – The Department of Justice Wants to Sentence the Three Student Leaders to Prison," August 10, 2017.

<https://www.singtaousa.com/237628->

{3} *Chinascopes*, "Wu Chi-wai: China Is Changing the "One Country, Two Systems" in Hong

Kong," June 13, 2017.

<http://chinascope.org/archives/12391>.