

Protests, Crack Downs, and the Future of Hong Kong: A Conversation with Jimmy Lai

A Conversation with Jimmy Lai and Jonathan Schanzer

MAY: Well, good afternoon. Thanks for being here today in person, and those of you who are here with us virtually and digitally as well. I'm Cliff May. I'm the founder and president of the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, FDD. I'm pleased to welcome you for this conversation, *Protests, Crack Downs, and the Future of Hong Kong*. With the ongoing protests taking place in the streets of Hong Kong, we're glad to have Jimmy Lai here with us to share what he is seeing on the ground and to discuss a range of other issues.

Today's program is one of the first public events FDD is hosting on the Indo-Pacific. Several of my colleagues, including Jon Schanzer who will moderate today's discussion, just returned from an informative trip to Asia. All of us at FDD are seeing the rising threat to free and democratic societies from the ruling Communist Party of China. We see this as a space that deserves more attention, and one which we are ramping up. For more information on our work, and to sign up for the latest analysis from FDD, we encourage you to visit our website, fdd.org. It should be very clear there how you do that. Hope so. If not, let us know.

We're glad to be joined today by a distinguished audience of diplomats, representatives from the executive branch, many experts from the policy community, and several domestic and international media outlets. Many of our audience members already know that FDD is a nonpartisan policy institute. We're a source for timely research, analysis, and policy options to Congress, the administration, the media, and the wider national security community. We accept no foreign government or foreign corporate funding.

In addition to the folks joining us here today, I'd like to welcome those tuning in over the livestream. We invite all of you to join in on the conversation, which we'll be live tweeting, and that'll be @FDD. At this time, I'd ask that you please silence your cell phones. I'm pleased to turn the mic over to our moderator for the day, Jon Schanzer, who is FDD's senior vice president for research. Jon, Jimmy, thank you.

SCHANZER: Thank you very much, Cliff, and for Jimmy Lai for being here today. I'm going to just give a quick introduction to Mr. Lai. For those of you who are not familiar with him, he is the chairman of Next Digital, the largest publicly traded media company in Hong Kong. His flagship publication, Apple Daily, which he founded in 1995, is the most widely read paper in Hong Kong and Taiwan today. Mr. Lai was educated to the fifth grade level and immigrated from Shanghai to Hong Kong at the age of –

LAI: No, Canton.

SCHANZER: What's that?

LAI: Not Shanghai, Canton.

SCHANZER: Oh, okay. I stand corrected. He immigrated to Hong Kong at the age of 13 where he first worked in a garment factory for \$8 a month? Do I have that correct?

LAI: Yeah.

SCHANZER: Today, he is the only Hong Kong business tycoon who is not pro-Beijing. He's an outspoken advocate of democracy for China, and in particular for the rights of abused Christians. He's been a strong supporter of Hong Kong's pan-democrats. So welcome.

LAI: Thank you.

SCHANZER: What I thought we would do today is to have a conversation just the two of us for a few minutes. Then what we'll do is we'll open up the floor to questions from the audience as well. But first, maybe we'll just start with if we can go back in time to the handover in 1997. That was obviously a big moment for us to be looking back on. Did you see signs early on? What's the evolution of China's encroachment onto Hong Kong? Obviously, you were supposed to have two systems, one country. Was that actually a practice or was that lip service, and why is it that we've gotten to this point of tension?

LAI: I think initially, it was very intentional of the Chinese. They were intentional very little to be honest up until they see that we had the guts to resist them. Like in 2014, they introduced the Bill 23, which is tightening the control of Hong Kong's freedom. We had over half a million people went out and demonstrated, and they withdrew the bill. After they withdrew the bill, they concentrated very hard on supporting those pro-establishment legislators and got a lot of more votes and kicked out some of the pan-democrats.

So, you can see that every movement that they back off, they actually come back and squeeze harder. They're our limit to freedom. Then that came and a better movement. We failed, we got nothing from it after 79 days sitting on the streets. After that, they squeezed further, eroding further to Hong Kong's freedom right, disqualifying some of the legislator and put some young politician in prison and banning some of the journalists coming to Hong Kong or canceled their visa, all that. Just every time you resist them, they just come back with more control, squeezing tighter and eroding the rule of law and the freedom we have.

SCHANZER: So, it sounds like they're clearly hijacking the system in Hong Kong, the idea of squeezing out the people that don't view the world the way that they do, don't have the same objectives. I mean, how have they done that and what are the kinds of people that they've been installing that have tried to promote the Beijing agenda?

LAI: Because we don't have the real democracy. We have a very limited legislator about it by the public. So, actually they have control of the legislative council. Almost half are nominated, their half is elected because the elected, they get a lot more resources than the pan-democrats. They get a lot of votes too. Yeah. They control it. They control it. Now this time the reasons they're resisting movement as you know is caused by the extradition law amendment, which is a very vicious conspiracy of undermining Hong Kong's rule of law and human right and freedom.

Even we were aware of the erosion of our freedom, we still took the freedom we had, the rule of law we have for granted until it's threatened to sign by extradition law amendment. So, everybody was very angry. They still are. We resist. We have two million people went out. Then what is amazing this time that changes everything is that the young people has taken up the torch to be leading the movement.

SCHANZER: Now if I can just ask you just to clarify, the extradition law, we're not concerned about – this is not about murderers who find their way to Hong Kong, right?

LAI: No.

SCHANZER: I mean, this is deliberately designed in the eyes of the Hong Kong's residents to basically send opponents of the regime in Beijing back to the mainland.

LAI: Yes.

SCHANZER: This is about neutralization of the opponents of the Beijing regime.

LAI: Exactly because if the Chinese communist can net anybody, arrest anybody into their jail, Hong Kong's rule of law is totally finished.

SCHANZER: Now, you've been obviously a proponent for independence of Hong Kong.

LAI: Not independence.

SCHANZER: Not independence, not political independence.

LAI: I support the democratization of Hong Kong. No.

SCHANZER: To have a separate system.

LAI: Yeah.

SCHANZER: Now, there are those who would say, "Well look, China is moving in the right direction. They are becoming more capitalist with Chinese's characteristics." This is the sort of thing that we hear is that well what's the problem? I mean, in essence, what's the concern that you have about the regime in Beijing? What do they do want and what do you not want them to do in Hong Kong?

LAI: Well, people's conception about China the richer they become, the more trouble they become, which has turned out to be untrue. They have actually becoming more bureaucrats around to the labor countries and squeezing people's liberty. The control today in China is unprecedented. There was never a dictator who had such a total control of people like what Xi has because nobody had the electronic devices to know where you are, to recognize where you go.

If you say something wrong, you immediately find out that you can't buy a train ticket. You can't buy an air ticket. You're not allowed in a lot of places. You're not allowed to open bank account. If you're a criminal, you go to the theater, in the entrance, they recognize your face and come and arrest you. So this kind of control, no dictator ever had in the past.

So that will be a great challenge for Xi when you have an innovation of this total control of people that nobody had. It's very dangerous because you have not built ability to manage that. You have not built ability to guard against people's revolt because history is trial and error. You can't all of a sudden create something and think that because you can have control that people will subservient to it. I think this is one of the danger Xi has created for himself.

SCHANZER: This is interesting to me because so you talk about the system that Xi's trying to implement, not only in the mainland, but potentially in Hong Kong and elsewhere. This would seem to undercut his own interests. Hong Kong's independence – political independence – or the separate system that it has is a money generator at the end of the day. This is the capital of finance that thrives on free market. So, was this an overreach on his part? Does it actually benefit him now that the people have come out and pushed back?

LAI: Well, one thing you have to understand of the communist, they are materialist. They only understand things when it hits them. They don't have idea about moral, about people's feeling, all that. They're just hard core materialists that only things counts when it moves.

So when they first introduced the extradition law, I'm sure they did not expect that the money is freeing, business people are moving out, that people are perceiving the rule of law is being undermined. So, the foundation of a financial center status is being erode because if you don't have rule of law, you can't have a financial center because where comes the protection, where comes the ability to trust in the financial institution because trust is a very important institution in the financial world, otherwise money will not move so fast.

So they did not understand it until things happened, but even if Hong Kong just slipped away, if Hong Kong people made so much trouble for them politically, they would rather have Hong Kong totally undermined and changed because we used to be 20% of the economy. Now we're only two and half. If the trouble is not worth for the two and half percent of the economy, to hell with it. Why should they care?

SCHANZER: Important point. You wrote a fascinating piece in the *New York Times* not too long ago. Your argument was not actually one about finance. It wasn't about money or what the value of Hong Kong was to the Chinese or how to push back in those ways, but rather you talked about moral force. Can you maybe just explain a little bit about what that idea means to you?

LAI: Well, I think for Hong Kong people's resistance, the fight against tyranny is a war of moral force. What do we have except moral force? We don't have guns. We don't have money. We don't have nothing. The only thing we have we can win and we can attack the vulnerability of communist is the lack of moral authority. That's the only way we can persist to resist them.

That's I think what that America has really forgotten how important a weapon they have in their hand which is moral authority.

A lot of people are saying that okay, we have a trade deal now with China. Let's not offend them. Let's do it afterwards. This is totally wrong and stupid. If the Chinese wants to talk about trade deal, the moral authority of America is a very strong and big deal chips on the table. This is what they don't have. That's a big chip you have in the negotiation against them. If they don't want to talk, nothing matters. If they want to talk, this is what you have that they don't have that you have to use because you have always to know that. You have to deal with the communists with strength not weaknesses.

And hina needs the world and America more than the world, and America need them, otherwise they won't talk to you. Why should they talk to you? So, I think it's about telling America, especially government, the thing about the very weapon they have in their hand, which is the moral authority they have. I'm sure the administration understands now.

SCHANZER: Well, there are a lot of people who would be critical of this administration and perhaps previous administrations of being a bit too transactional; not promoting democracy, not supporting democracy. I think when we look at especially what's happening in Hong Kong right now, I think it's potentially a missed opportunity, but you have actually had an opportunity over the last couple of days to meet with the Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo.

LAI: Right. Yesterday.

SCHANZER: You met with Vice President, Mike Pence.

LAI: Yes, yesterday.

SCHANZER: You met with a number of senior senators as well.

LAI: Meeting them now.

SCHANZER: Meeting them today. What are these conversations? I mean, what happens in these conversations? Are you getting a sense that America is ready to commit to supporting Hong Kong? Is this a work in progress?

LAI: Well, I think they all agree that Hong Kong is fighting a war of the same values as you. It means that we're fighting your war in your enemy camp. We need your support. Without the support, we won't have the wherewithal morally and materially to really persist this resistance. You know, your support is very important. That's why I asked Mr. Pompeo and Vice President. I said, "Look, say something to encourage the Hong Kong people, especially young people."

It's like when Kennedy went to Berlin, he said that "I'm a Berliner". How much confidence and hope he gave to the Berliner to face the threat of Soviet Union at the time. We need the same thing. We need the support. We need the confidence. We need the hope. We need

to know that America is behind us. By backing us, the America also sowing to the will of their moral authority because we are the only place in China, a tiny island in China, which is sharing your values, which is fighting the same war you have with China.

If we think that we're starting a cold war with China today, a cold war that's a war of competing values, and we're on your side sacrificing our life, our freedom, everything we have, fighting this war in the frontier for you, should you support us? This is something that America has to know, not only supporting us, but use your moral authority in this cold war to win this war in the beginning because they have nothing. It's like they are going to the battle without any weapon, and you have the nuclear weapon. You can finish them in a minute.

SCHANZER: We hear a lot about the shift to great power conflict here in this town right now. That we're moving away from wars in Middle East and we now need to face challenges coming from Russia to a lesser extent, China to a greater extent. Is the moral support that you're talking about, is that enough? Are the things that America can do beyond just saying that we support you? For example, I mean, we were just in Taiwan recently, and the Taiwanese were watching very intently as protests were erupting –

LAI: – In Hong Kong.

SCHANZER: – in Hong Kong. They were saying that this could be the beginning of a counter movement. I think we can broaden out a little bit to the rest of Asia. I mean, what should the U.S. be thinking about here?

LAI: I think of course the U.S. cannot just say it. You have to show your sincerity, your support with actions, but like if you send some Senators or Congressmen to Hong Kong and just to be there to offer your support physically to the Hong Kong people, you know how much impact you can make, how much more force you can reinforce in our heart, in our mind, to really fight this war? This is something I think the America has to know about, not just to say it.

SCHANZER: Just maybe a slight diversion. You became a Catholic in 1997. You've been an outspoken advocate for the rights of abused Christians in China. Can you talk just a little bit about that as well?

LAI: Well yeah. I'm in a very devote family. I became a Catholic just because the influence of the family. And also at that time, I did not think about it very clearly but instinctively I think that I need the strength of the faith because everybody was telling me that if they arrest 10 people, you're one of them. So if I'm in prison and have a faith, maybe I can stay for longer, but anyway that was not I was thinking about.

But I think I naturally became a Catholic and I think the faith gave me a lot more sense of the righteousness to fight. I don't have to worry about it. If I really have a God that I believe, a faith that I can put my whole life to, all I have to do is just do the right thing. So I'll overcome my fear because the communist what they use most effectively is impose fear in you.

Like somebody asked me whether you think the resistance now is going on will eventually end up like Tiananmen Massacre 30 years ago. Is it possible? I said, "Yes, it's possible," for a few reasons. First, because the communist they only know about force, nothing else. The principle of rule is control, control, control. If they find out that they cannot control us, they will have to use force to a point that they use in Tiananmen Massacre. They can justify this because now they look at the Hong Kong people, a large part of it, as importables, somebody they don't need.

All this people, the trouble these people make they don't want, but they can't suppress us. The more they suppress, the more we bounce back. The way that they look at us as the Hitler was looking at the Jews, "Let's get rid of them." They can't get us but they can impose so much fear that we feel totally hopeless and migrate. If they create a massacre like Tiananmen, all these people will give up. So desperate, they will migrate and they will get rid of all these importables who we are to the Chinese government.

We're just 0.05% of the opportunity, 0.05%. This is the percentage they look at us, not human. They look at us 0.05%. This is what Hong Kong is. They can get rid of this 0.05% and have peace. They can replace the Hong Kong people many times in Hong Kong. This can happen.

SCHANZER: So, I do want to get to Q&A, but I want to ask you one final question. You've painted a potentially bleak picture of a possible Tiananmen type of situation further down the line.

LAI: Right.

SCHANZER: Right now, the Hong Kong people seem to have walked away with sort of a victory. The chief executive seems to have killed the bill, the extradition bill. So, it looks as if the Hong Kong has emerged victorious at least in this round. There is no permanent victory here. It does seem like it's a permanent battle. If you were to guess, what is China's next move? What is Beijing's next move on Hong Kong?

LAI: I don't believe this is a victory. I don't believe there's even a small victory because after this extradition law amendment, we know that we will always be facing the same vicious conspiracy, the vicious government we just faced without democracy, without universal suffrage. Even if we win this, they totally withdrawal it. Carrie Lam, the chief executive is going to step down and a few of these high officials step down, but the force is still there. We are still always under the duress of this regime. If we don't have the universal suffrage, we will always face the same devil we face. Unless we have universal suffrage, there's no victory.

SCHANZER: Understood. Well, thank you very much for these comments here. I do want to open it up to the floor. So if you have a question, just please raise your hand. We have some microphones that will be circulating. So as soon as you raise your hand, we'll get one to you, but why don't we start here with General Jack Keane in the front row.

KEANE: Thanks Jimmy for your comments.

LAI: Thank you.

KEANE: We really appreciate it. The moral force that you represent is very admirable.

LAI: Thank you.

KEANE: Two million people out of seven million, in the United States that would mean over 85 million people protesting. That's amazing. I think in just listening to you and others, the size of the demonstration, how it transcended generations, what was really the energy that drove it to the heights that it was able to achieve and still does achieve?

LAI: I think the sense of crisis that people were losing their way of life. We took all this, the way of life, the freedom, we had for granted until it's really threatened and come so close to our heart, to our body, to our family. All of a sudden, we know that this is the last war. If we don't stand in front of this line and fight for it, all we have will be lost forever. This is the last war and this is very probable in the way people were talking, in the way people are connecting, in the way people were interacting.

So that's why this is first time actually the older generation and the younger generation united into a resistance because the younger generation always accused us of not achieving anything. We were not paying enough attention to the younger generation because they were not mobilized like they are today, and they haven't shown the moral courage and discipline in intellectual exercise they have displayed in this movement.

Now, let's take the recent raid of the legislation council. Yes, they destroy something, but what they destroyed is very small and the means of destruction is used as a symbolic gesture to protest against the government. It's not an intention of destruction. They just paint some slogan on the wall, deface some of the photos of the past chairman, and they broke the glasses to get into the building. That's all they did. If they had intention for destruction, they would have destroyed a lot of things.

They keep all their artworks on the shelf, totally untouched, with a post. Somebody put a post there, "Don't touch and destroy." They took the drink from the refrigerator, the fridge, and they put down the money and they even put some coins for other protestors who have no money, but have to use electronic payment and leave their name there. So they were very disciplined. They were very careful and very concerned about each other. These are not rioters. These are very disciplined young men knowing what they are doing.

SCHANZER: Other questions. Right here on the front end.

LIU: Thank you, Mr. Lai.

LAI: Thank you.

LIU: It's a great pleasure to have you here. I have a couple of questions. First of all, after you met with the U.S. Secretary – Sorry. I'm name is Liu. I'm a reporter with Voice of America's

Mandarin service. After you met with US Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, Beijing has already expressed its displeasure suggesting that the US is interfering in its internal affairs, and also implying that you're trying to create chaos in Hong Kong. I want to know if you have any reaction to that. Secondly –

LAI: First, first, otherwise I'll forget the first ones.

LIU: Okay.

LAI: I think it's an honor to be accused by the Chinese. We never wanted to create riots. It is the government who wanted to take away our freedom. Our rule of law has forced us to react like this. They accuse me of destroying the rule of law in Hong Kong. I haven't done this. I think what they did is really destroying the rule of law in Hong Kong. So I don't care what they say and what they say really will be an honor to me.

LIU: Okay. My second question is you made a very strong case for U.S. expressing support for Hong Kong. You also mentioned some specific actions that United States can take such as sending senders and Congressmen to Hong Kong. I wonder what else do you think the U.S. and the international community can do to support Hong Kong other than the things you mentioned, other than just words.

LAI: I think it's very important that the world will keep Hong Kong a first class city in the world. The more support we have from the outside world, the less our economy has to depend on China. The greater independence we feel, the greater force we can use to resist China.

So the outside world support will give us the wherewithal to persist in our fight, morally and materially, like making Hong Kong a free port again, give Hong Kong both preference in trade terms, in financing terms, and also maybe give Hong Kong the technology support that you don't give to China. Of course, you have to verify it because technology is very important to make Hong Kong a first class city in the future. We have to be the top class city to survive the persecution from China. The greater the resource that we have in the Hong Kong economy, the greater resource we can use for resistance.

SCHANZER: Other questions. Yes, ma'am in the back.

LIU: I think he's first.

SCHANZER: Oh I'm sorry.

BASHI: It's okay. You go first. It doesn't matter.

SCHANZER: Go ahead.

BASHI: Ariel Bashi with CNN. I'm just curious if you think President Xi fears footage of a Tiananmen-like incident in Hong Kong going around the world and that would stop him from doing something like that in Hong Kong. My second question is –

LAI: What's that? The first one.

BASHI: If he fears images circulating around the world of a similar incident like Tiananmen Square in Hong Kong. My second question is what do you make of the relationship in the way President Trump approaches President Xi and vice versa.

LAI: Well, the first question, I'm sure they will be very careful to create a Tiananmen massacre in Hong Kong, but you also have to understand the recklessness of the communist party. Politics is first and foremost the most important. If they don't think that they can suppress the Hong Kong movement, they will be aware of the danger of Hong Kong's resistant movements becoming a beacon to the moral conscience of Chinese in China.

If this happens when the Chinese economy is plummeting, it will be dangerous for the regime because the communist parties, legitimacy of their rule on the people is their claim to improve people's economic welfare. I'll give you an example. Just recently, even a year ago, a few of the real estate company, they sold part of their real estate at a higher price. After six month, they lower price, I forgot about 15% or 17%.

People went out to demonstrate and government intervened to make sure that this company compensate those who bought it more expensively because people in China they have the conception of human right very different from us because the Chinese regimes legitimacy is based on improving the economic welfare of the people, economic welfare becomes the human right of the Chinese people.

If the economy plummet at the same time, the message of Hong Kong or Taiwan's people resistance is spreading to the Chinese in China and all people need is five minutes to overcome their fear and they will be in big trouble. So I think that the movement we made, we're actually sending the moral force to the moral conscience of the Chinese people. That is what they are afraid of. If they're afraid of this, if they want to come against this, they can use whatever method they use and that become Tiananmen Massacre. What is your next question?

BASHI: What do you make of the relationship between President Trump and President Xi, how they relate to each other?

LAI: I think President Trump now knows, because President Trump as a businessman, as all the businessman, they don't have the sensitivity for moral force as a politician or as a social activist, but I think President Trump is very smart. He knows that now the moral authority as a chip on the table in negotiating with China is powerful, is useful. I'm sure he will use that. I'm sure he will turn to that. He's a very smart businessman. This is a very strong and powerful weapon for him to use in negotiation.

LIU: Hi, I'm from Radio Free Asia, but I'm not a reporter. My question is, one of the things that we noticed very much in this last round of protests is the participation of people from the mainland. I'm wondering if you have thoughts on what the impact is on mainland. What is it that gave mainlanders the courage, or the interest, or the passion, to participate in these protests? I mean I thought that was a very significant change.

LAI: Well yes, there are some mainland participants but what's more important, we see a lot of newly immigrants. Once they have freedom and hindsight, they know how precious and valuable freedom is. That's why having lived in Hong Kong for some time, they also want to participate in this resistance. I think that's what I just earlier talked about the danger China is facing with Hong Kong people rising up and having the moral courage to fight the tyranny if that information, which will definitely reach to the Chinese consciousness, will be very dangerous for them if there's an economic crisis to happen in China.

SCHANZER: Other questions? I have a question here in the front from Ambassador Wolfowitz.

WOLFOWITZ: Jimmy, thank you for being here –

LAI: Thank you.

WOLFOWITZ: – And thank you for the courage you have to be on the top 10 list of the PLC. In fact, I think you moved yourself up a little higher on the list. It takes a lot of courage and we admire that. I admire that. The government in Beijing keep saying that they represent 1.2 billion Chinese, but there's never been a vote to demonstrate that. If they were as vote, as you've said, the people are too afraid to express their real opinion and they're kept ignorant of the real facts.

What is your feeling if China – How many of those 1.2 billion Chinese do you think really want to continue the system that they have under the communist, and how many would prefer to live under Hong Kong government? It's ironic that Hong Kong was established as a colony of a colonial power.

LAI: Well, I think the Chinese, as I said, before they know the freedom, they don't know how to treasure it. The inertia of living in an environment that you get used to, the fear that is already inside your system, you just don't have the opening up to new ideas, to a new struggle, to a new way of life. I think some crisis has to trigger it, some crisis has to trigger it so the people will break out of their complacency or inertia.

That's why in North Korea, everybody is a very obedient them. Same in China. When you are being frightened into an inertia, you don't know that you're being frightened. You don't know that you're any different from all the other people. Only in relative to what you know, what you have from hindsight, you know how precious freedom is.

I think that needs to be some breakthrough, some trigger and that's what I talked about that if the economy really plummets, coupled with the influence from the resistance of the Hong Kong and people realize the moral courage of the Hong Kong people and overcome their fear, it only takes 10 minutes, five minutes for people to walk out and the regime will be in big trouble. I don't mean that they will fall, but they will be in big, big trouble.

SCHANZER: What would you say, just to follow up on that, we hear a lot about how the standard of living in the mainland has gone up, that the economy has skyrocketed, and that

people are far more satisfied now than they ever have been. I mean, you can't compare mainland China to North Korea because – I mean, right?

LAI: No.

SCHANZER: I guess maybe talk about the challenges that people face politically and how the economy plays into that.

LAI: I think people definitely is better off. I think they're happier even, but everything is relative. I think to a point people know that that the intangibles are more important than the tangibles. That's why the new immigrants in Hong Kong, a lot of them joined this resistance movement just because they found out that they are intangible, they are moral value. There are things we never knew, but it's so precious to our life. I mean, that's something they will find out.

SCHANZER: We have other questions from the audience. Yes sir.

HAMMOND-CHAMBERS: Rupert Hammond-Chambers, US-Taiwan Business Council. Jimmy, President Tsai Ing-wen of Taiwan will be in the United States later this week. I wonder if you could touch a little bit on how you think what is happening in Hong Kong is impacting Taiwan at the moment. As some of you, or many of you may know here, Taiwan has a presidential election next January the 11th, highly contested. I wonder if you could talk a wee bit about how it's impacting?

LAI: Well, the KMT, you know the KMT Kuomintang, they have two of their most popular presidential candidate of China leaning, both in China leaning, almost the puppets of the Chinese. When the first resistance movement happened in Hong Kong and the reporter asked them, "What is real?" They said, "Oh, we don't know about this. We didn't notice about this." They tried to avoid up until they see their poll drop precipitously. They all of a sudden alert and two weeks later came out in support the Hong Kong movement for two things.

First, they got to get elected, so they can do whatever they like. Second, the reason why they came out two weeks later, maybe they had to get the permission from China to do so. So, I think from this perspective you see that Hong Kong's movement actually is impacting the politics in Taiwan and there's a reason rally in front of the presidential palace in Taiwan protesting the rat media because a lot of or I would say most actually the media in Taiwan are owned by tycoons who have big business in China.

All those tycoons use the acquisition of the media to turn it into Chinese leaning as a political PR to do business in China. So this really outraged the Taiwanese people after they've seen the resistance movement in Hong Kong. I think there will be another campaign. There's another very soon approaching to the final stage of the election.

As a media guy, I noticed that the Taiwanese were not so interested in what happened to Hong Kong. For instance, we had demonstration. We have rallies to involve anniversary, almost nobody care in Taiwan. But this time during this movement, our paper carried three or four front pages in the newspaper and the readership, the online readership, is phenomenal. People in

Taiwan they wrote songs, they rally, they sing the song in the street in support of Hong Kong's movement. They have a group of young people came to Hong Kong to join the movement.

The solidarity now is built between these two spaces is a moral solidarity. That makes Hong Kong and Taiwan a nightmare for the Chinese because whatever they hurt Hong Kong, Taiwan reacts and vice versa. That makes it very complicated for Chinese to handle these two places. This we enforce Hong Kong and Taiwan's each other's moral courage in fighting the war because we are fighting the same enemy. We are under the same persecution. That same, the sameness, has united us into a solidarity, and this is going to be more and more solid when time comes. This will be big nightmare for the Chinese's regime.

SCHANZER: It's interesting. When we were in Taiwan just a few weeks ago, we were hearing a lot about Xi Jinping's statement about the year 2020 being a fateful one for relationships between China and Taiwan. So something that was on the minds of the many of the officials that we spoke to. I think this also contributed to their sense of urgency in what was happening in Hong Kong that they wanted to see things go the right way. That perhaps it would keep Beijing occupied in lots of different places and not to be able to turn their attention to Taiwan as well.

LAI: Well, I think the movement in Hong Kong is a reminder or constant movement will be a constant reminder to the world that China is not to be trusted. I just heard that a lot of the money now, there will be money in Washington from China. That is a PR hole. No matter how much money you have, you cannot feel. Money is not everything. Moral force is everything now in this cold war with China. This is a recognition that American people have it to recognize. It is your moral authority that we win over China.

It is your moral authority that in 20 years the world will embark in your values and not dominate by the biggest economy the greater monster that we have to face that dominate Asia and the world with their values. If we look at the 20 years down and ask ourselves whether we want our children to live in a world like this, it's time for us now to act to solve our moral force in fighting this cold war.

SCHANZER: Unfortunately, we've run out of time here, but I want to first of all thank you –

LAI: Thank you.

SCHANZER: – for joining us today for a terrific conversation.

LAI: Thank you.

SCHANZER: I want to wish you success in your meetings here in Washington with senior senators and others. We hope you'll come back and visit us and share stories of your success looking back on this movement in Hong Kong. Thank you.

LAI: Thank you.