

How Washington Is Meddling in the Affairs of Hong Kong

By [A Political Junkie](#)

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Region: [Asia](#), [USA](#)

Theme: [Intelligence](#), [Police State & Civil Rights](#)

While there has been growing coverage of the unrest in Hong Kong, there has been minimal coverage of what may lie behind the pro-democracy protests. Even Donald Trump has entered the fray with [this tweet](#) which clearly condemns China's actions against protestors in Hong Kong:



Donald J. Trump ✓

@realDonaldTrump

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Our Intelligence has informed us that the Chinese Government is moving troops to the Border with Hong Kong. Everyone should be calm and safe!

10:17 AM - 13 Aug 2019

15,802 Retweets 51,752 Likes



8.9K 16K 52K

As you will see in this posting, it is entirely possible that a Washington-based and Congressionally funded institution is responsible, at least in part, for the lack of calmness in Hong Kong.

A few weeks ago, I wrote [this posting](#) on the [National Endowment for Democracy](#) or NED, America's instrument of democratic promotion around the world, that is, democracy American style. NED was founded in 1983 during the Reagan Administration with the following Statement of Principles and Objectives:

“Democracy involves the right of the people freely to determine their own destiny.

The exercise of this right requires a system that guarantees freedom of expression, belief and association, free and competitive elections, respect for the inalienable rights of individuals and minorities, free communications media, and the rule of law.”

While NED touts itself as a “private” foundation, in other words, it is independent of government. That could not be further from the truth. Here’s what NED has to say about itself that belies its true character:

“NED is a unique institution. The Endowment’s nongovernmental character gives it a flexibility that makes it possible to work in some of the world’s most difficult circumstances, and to respond quickly when there is an opportunity for political change. NED is dedicated to fostering the growth of a wide range of democratic institutions abroad, including political parties, trade unions, free markets and business organizations, as well as the many elements of a vibrant civil society that ensure human rights, an independent media, and the rule of law.

This well-rounded approach responds to the diverse aspects of democracy and has proved both practical and effective throughout NED’s history. Funded largely by the U.S. Congress, the support NED gives to groups abroad sends an important message of solidarity to many democrats who are working for freedom and human rights, often in obscurity and isolation....

From its beginning, NED has remained steadfastly bipartisan. Created jointly by Republicans and Democrats, NED is governed by a board balanced between both parties and enjoys Congressional support across the political spectrum. NED operates with a high degree of transparency and accountability reflecting our founders’ belief that democracy promotion overseas should be conducted openly.” (my bolds)

Despite its proclamation that it has a “nongovernmental character”, NED receives its funding through an annual appropriation from Congress through the Department of State making it little more than another mouthpiece for Washington’s agenda. NED promotes Washington’s global agenda through direct grants to more than 1600 non-governmental groups that are working for “democracy” in more than 90 nations around the world.

Let’s look at NED’s activities in Hong Kong for 2018 according to its website. [Here](#) are the projects that were funded over the period from 2015 to 2018:

Project Title:	Strengthening Democratic Institutions and Human Rights Protection	Year: 2018
Project Region:	Asia	Award Amount: \$90,000
Project Country:	Hong Kong (China)	
Project Focus:	Human Rights	
Description:	To strengthen democratic institutions and human rights protections. The program will work with civil society networks and political leaders to improve compliance with international standards for human rights, and will seek to increase the international community's awareness of human rights abuses in Hong Kong through advocacy and as part of the Universal Periodic Review process.	
Project Title:	Supporting Free Expression in Hong Kong	Year: 2016
Project Region:	Asia	Award Amount: \$54,000
Project Country:	Hong Kong (China)	
Project Focus:	Freedom of Information	
Description:	To strengthen voices defending freedom of information and expression. The grantee will work with local stakeholders to advocate for free expression and freedom of information in Hong Kong through solidarity building and public events calling attention to diminishing freedom of information.	
Project Title:	Strengthening Democratic Institutions and Human Rights Protection	Year: 2017
Project Region:	Asia	Award Amount: \$99,109
Project Country:	Hong Kong (China)	
Project Focus:	Human Rights	
Description:	To strengthen democratic institutions and human rights protections. Activities will include working with civil society networks and political leaders to improve compliance with international standards for human rights, and will seek to increase the international community's awareness of human rights abuses in Hong Kong.	
Project Title:	Expanding Worker Rights and Democracy	Year: 2015
Organization Name:	Solidarity Center (SC)	Award Amount: \$195,465
Project Region:	Asia	
Project Country:	Hong Kong (China)	
Project Focus:	Freedom of Association	
Description:	To advance worker rights and democracy and strengthen civil society. The center will collaborate with partners to strengthen the organizing, negotiation, and advocacy skills of the Hong Kong trade unions regarding trade union and industrial relations issues. The project will also seek to promote understanding in the international labor and human rights communities about worker rights developments in China and to advocate for legal and judicial reforms that advance worker rights and collective bargaining.	
Project Title:	Expanding Worker Rights and Democracy	Year: 2016
Organization Name:	Solidarity Center (SC)	Award Amount: \$133,600
Project Region:	Asia	
Project Country:	Hong Kong (China)	
Project Focus:	Freedom of Association	
Description:	To advance worker rights and democracy and strengthen the development of civil society. The center will support partners to strengthen democratic trade union efforts, including organizing, collective bargaining and advocacy skills. Project activities will raise public awareness and promote community participation on worker rights issues.	
Project Title:	Supporting Civic Engagement on Fundamental Rights	Year: 2017
Organization Name:	National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI)	Award Amount: \$300,000
Project Region:	Asia	
Project Country:	Hong Kong (China)	
Project Focus:	NGO Strengthening	
Description:	To support civic engagement on fundamental rights in Hong Kong by promoting dialogue on political reform and strengthening the capacity of civil society to advocate for guaranteed rights. The institute will build on past public opinion research to engender discussion on political reform. In addition, it will help to develop organizational management and advocacy capacities of an emerging legal advocacy group working to defend Hong Kong citizens' civil liberties.	
Project Title:	Expanding Worker Rights and Democracy	Year: 2017
Organization Name:	Solidarity Center (SC)	Award Amount: \$130,800
Project Region:	Asia	
Project Country:	Hong Kong (China)	
Project Focus:	Freedom of Association	
Description:	To expand worker rights and democracy, and promote the development of civil society in Hong Kong. The center will support partners to strengthen the capacity of trade, migrant worker, and domestic worker unions to organize, bargain collectively, engage in public policy advocacy, and increase public awareness of and participation in worker rights issues.	
Project Title:	Promoting Engagement of Fundamental Rights	Year: 2018
Organization Name:	National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI)	Award Amount: \$200,000
Project Region:	Asia	
Project Country:	Hong Kong (China)	
Project Focus:	Accountability and Governance	
Description:	To facilitate engagement on Hong Kong's growing threats to guaranteed rights. The institute will organize a seminar series in Hong Kong on how national security can be protected while safeguarding fundamental rights and will facilitate international advocacy for Hong Kong scholars, legal practitioners, and civil society leaders to raise awareness of recent developments among influential international stakeholders.	
Project Title:	Expanding Worker Rights and Democracy	Year: 2018
Organization Name:	Solidarity Center (SC)	Award Amount: \$155,000
Project Region:	Asia	
Project Country:	Hong Kong (China)	
Project Focus:	Rule of Law	
Description:	To expand worker rights and democracy and promote the development of civil society in Hong Kong. The center will support partners to strengthen the capacity of trade unions, including migrant and domestic worker unions, to organize, bargain and advocate for better protections for workers, and to raise public awareness and promote participation in worker rights issues.	

Notice that the 2018 funding to the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs was granted to “facilitate engagement on Hong Kong’s growing threats to guaranteed rights”. That certainly sounds like promoting democracy to me. NED spent a total of \$1,357,974 on grants to organizations that were promoting freedom, democracy and human rights in Hong Kong over the period from 2015 to 2018. Unfortunately, we don’t know what NED spent on promoting democracy in Hong Kong in the timeframe prior to 2015. While, in the grand scheme of what Washington spends this is not a great deal of money, it is the principle of what Washington is attempting to create in Hong Kong that is of concern. This is a very clear example of meddling in the internal affairs of China and Hong Kong, actions that will only serve to anger China who is the also the recipient of a great deal of NED’s attention. It is also key to remember that there are likely other taxpayer-funded programs through which Washington is attempting to influence what happens in Hong Kong.

In my opinion, [this tweet](#) by the conservative-leaning Washington Examiner is a dead giveaway to the source of the unrest:

Video from Hong Kong shows pro-democracy protesters waving American flags and singing the American National Anthem.

Demonstrations have shutdown the city's airport for a second consecutive day and put the entire Chinese city on edge. pic.twitter.com/ZrYE5DzZYU

— Washington Examiner (@dcexaminer) [August 13, 2019](#)

While the ideals of democracy are admirable and desirable, Washington’s version of democracy is tainted by big money and has developed into a system where politicians are for sale to the highest bidder. This is not the democracy that most of the world wants.

Long-term Congressional meddling in other nations internal affairs through its funding of the National Endowment for Democracy is little better than the nation reengineering exercises undertaken by the Central Intelligence Agency since the end of the Second World War.

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