

Hong Kong still battling but China has won the war



People stand in the lobby of the offices of China's Xinhua News Agency damaged by protesters in Hong Kong, Saturday, Nov. 2, 2019. Hong Kong riot police fired multiple rounds of tear gas and used a water cannon Saturday to break up a rally by thousands of masked protesters demanding meaningful autonomy after Beijing indicated it could tighten its grip on the Chinese territory. (AP Photo/Kin Cheung)

The so-called battle for Hong Kong is still raging. Over the weekend, the capitalist entrepot witnessed its 22nd straight week of protests against Beijing's heavy hand.

While the demonstrations are both smaller and more violent than when they first erupted five months ago to protest a law (now withdrawn) that would have allowed extraditions from Hong Kong to Mainland China — this weekend's flare-up saw numerous stores smashed and even a stabbing in a shopping mall — their longevity has been extraordinary.

In 1989, Tiananmen Square had been occupied for barely a month when the tanks

rolled in. Other mass movements across the world have fizzled in a matter of weeks as protesters were suppressed, placated or simply grew bored.

Hong Kong's defiant spirit — its will to battle — is remarkable. But the war is over. And China won.

Five months ago, the Hong Kong protests looked to many like a genuine challenge to Beijing, one that could shake the foundations of Communist rule. The extraordinary mass rallies that characterized the beginning of the movement, with roughly 1 million people taking to the streets in a city of only 7 million, were by far the most profound challenge to the Chinese Communist Party since 1989.

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