



the LOCAL IMPACT

Support for protesters in Hong Kong grows in the US

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U A students voiced concerns about protests in Hong Kong as tensions continue to rise after the Hong Kong government proposed a controversial bill in February 2019.

Following the proposal of the Fugitive Offenders bill, which would allow convicted criminals in Hong Kong to be extradited to mainland China to face harsher censorship laws, protesters took to the streets of Hong Kong on March 15, 2019, in opposition of the bill.

Alex Jackson, a sophomore who lived in Hong Kong for eight years, thinks the protests have shifted focus toward gaining more freedom from mainland China, he said.

"The bill was the straw that broke the camel's back," Jackson said, "After that, everything started to break out."

People around the globe boycotted the video game company Blizzard Entertainment in Oct. 2019 for punishing e-sport player Ng Wai Chung. Blizzard issued Chung a year-long

ban and revoked his winnings of \$10,000 after he expressed his support for the Hong Kong protesters in a livestream.

Jackson thinks Blizzard's harsh punishment of Chung was completely uncalled for and was only an attempt

Rockets NBA team, showed support for the protesters in Hong Kong on Twitter. However, Morey later took the tweet down after the Houston Rockets lost contracts with several Chinese vendors.

A week prior to the New

Jackson thinks a lot of the support from these communities is misguided due to misinformation from both the protesters and the Chinese government, he said. Jackson doubts there will be any official support from the U.S., he said.

protesters in Hong Kong because of how the people of Hong Kong are being treated, he said.

"If we stand up for Hong Kong, we are setting an example for the rest of the Eastern world," Lochner said.

Response by the Hong Kong government to the protests has been escalating with the protests on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, resulting in the arrests of more than 100 protesters.

Jackson thinks that for some people in Hong Kong, protesting is their only option because many are unable to leave the area, but he fears what long term effects the protests might have for those who continue to live in Hong Kong.

"For a lot of locals, their only option is to fight, because their whole futures are being destroyed," Jackson said.

Jackson thought the 2019 riots would be similar to the Umbrella Riots that took place in Hong Kong in 2014, but realized as time went on that these protests were much more serious than previous ones, he said. However, he does not know if or when Hong Kong will return to how it was.

"I want there to be a change," Jackson said. "I want there to be a resolution, but both sides are too stubborn. The only way (the protests) will end is if China or Hong Kong changes."



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- Sophomore Alex Jackson

by Blizzard to save their reputation with their Asian audiences, he said.

Members of the NBA, such as Daryl Morey, general manager for the Houston

York Brooklyn Nets' first home game of the 2019-20 season, many fans entered the arena wearing T-shirts with the phrase: "Stand with Hong Kong."

However, Robert Lochner, a sophomore and committee member of College Democrats of Arkansas, thinks that it is important to show support for the

Lochner has tried to offer as much help as possible to Hong Kong by contacting Sen. Tom Cotton (R) asking him to vote for the U.S. to stop selling tear-gas to Hong Kong police forces, he said.

Decades of conflict with US impacts Iranian students

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reads the news. He worries for his family in Iran, who are restless from years of ongoing tension, he said.

"It's hard to be Iranian and deal with all of that," Taghavi said.

Taghavi thinks although the death of Soleimani was justified, his assassination has divided Iranian citizens, he said. He thinks trust between citizens and the government has dissolved, as well as trust between each other.

"People are very hard to depend on each other, and it's really harder to trust each other back home right now," Taghavi said. "They're trying to keep their lives safe. Needing to protect yourself from your own people is definitely not a good thing for any country."

Because of the tension, communicating with loved ones across borders has become increasingly difficult, Taghavi said.

"There's a level right now where people have difficulty to send money to their family

or even get a flight right now," Taghavi said.

Taghavi thinks the U.S. and Iranian governments are not likely to cooperate anytime soon, but education on both sides is crucial to reaching a peaceful agreement, he said. He thinks everyone could benefit from learning about other countries' cultures and traditions, and that mutual understanding could be the first step toward peace.

Shirin Saeidi, an assistant professor of political science and Middle East studies, said the U.S. government's decision in May 2018 to withdraw from the Iran Nuclear Deal intensified sanctions on Iran, which is essentially an application of economic terrorism.

"Once that happens,

it becomes difficult to negotiate with Iran over its regional politics because Iran is a regional power," Saeidi said. "It is one of the more powerful countries in the Middle East that is challenging U.S. domination, Israeli politics and the politics of the Saudis."

The 2015 Iran Nuclear Deal, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, was an agreement between the Islamic Republic of Iran and a group of world powers including the permanent members of the U.N. Security Council – the U.S., the U.K., Russia, France and China – plus Germany and

the European Union. Under the framework of the agreement, Iran would redesign, convert and reduce its nuclear facilities and lift all nuclear-related economic sanctions.



Pouria Taghavi, a sophomore who was born in Iran, said Jan. 14 he worries for his family at home as conflicts between the U.S. and Iran intensify.

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