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OPINION

# Trump is right to not flap the wings of the American eagle in China's face over Hong Kong

Tom Plate , Opinion contributor Published 6:22 p.m. ET Aug. 15, 2019

***Figuring a way out of idiotic trade war is better than trying to figure a way to intervene in the Hong Kong troubles: Opposing view***

The notion that the United States should lead a global coalition, as if filing an amicus brief to the court of world opinion in the matter of the People of Hong Kong v. the Chief Executive of Hong Kong, is a charming one.

But the play would be ineffective or, worse yet, counterproductive. Beijing would harden its stance and use the Western gesture to solidify its claim of “foreign interference.” This would inflame anti-West mainland nationalists all the more.

The effort would also be technically unsupportable under international law, by the same standard that the fraught issue of how to handle illegal or legal immigrants on the U.S. southern border is a sovereign matter for Washington, not for some ersatz China-led global coalition.

What's more, America's failure to deal with issues of gun violence as well as the immigrant influx has not raised its credibility globally.

President Donald Trump, whatever his reasons, is right to react cautiously and not, in this case, wildly flap the wings of the American eagle in Beijing's face. His evident preference to try to figure a way out of his idiotic U.S.-China trade war is better for America than trying to figure a way to intervene in the Hong Kong troubles and cause further trouble.



Chinese magazines in Hong Kong. (Photo: Andy Wong/AP)

Beijing is well aware that people everywhere are watching it warily, which is one reason behind its relative restraint, so far. The existence of Hong Kong (roughly the same population as metropolitan Washington, D.C.) as a semi-independent metropolis of China is a huge asset for the world.

The best way forward is for America and anyone else sincerely concerned to maintain a low profile, and for Chairman Xi Jinping to continue to proceed cautiously — feeling his way across the tricky stream (as the Chinese saying goes) one stone at a time ... and not slip in front of the whole world.

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