Pragmatism rules

While the unprecedented intervention by Beijing to salvage Chief Executive Donald Tsang's tattered reputation might appear to have cemented the China's expansion of its political and economic influence in Hong Kong, time may be running out for the city's leading democrats.

As Hong Kong was being transformed into a "one country, two systems" reality in which Beijing's control over the city is becoming more evident, some political observers have argued that it is time for democrats to halt their criticism of Beijing.

These statements may look as though Beijing's position on Hong Kong is more or less inviolate, but the fact is that Chinese leaders' expectations are not met by the current democratic realizaitons.

The situation is worsening for democrats, both in China and in Hong Kong. However, the demands of Beijing for a "normalized" political environment are not as high as the democrats' expectations.

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