

CHINA OPPOSES U.K.'S CITIZENSHIP OFFER

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: Effect of policies and politics of developed & developing countries on India's interests

Return to normality:An employee removing pro-democracy stickers at a restaurant in Hong Kong on Thursday.
APKin Cheung

China warned Britain on Thursday it could retaliate with “corresponding measures” for London’s decision to extend a broader path to citizenship for the residents of Hong Kong.

Britain’s offer came in response to a sweeping new security law that China unveiled for the former British territory this week.

Hong Kong was under U.K. jurisdiction until it was handed over to China in 1997 with a guarantee that Beijing would preserve the city’s judicial and legislative autonomy for 50 years.

The Chinese Embassy in London stressed that “all Chinese compatriots residing in Hong Kong are Chinese nationals”.

‘Breach of basic norms’

The British plan covers almost three million Hong Kongers who either have a British National Overseas (BNO) passports or are eligible to apply for one.

The Embassy said these people were Chinese nationals as well. “If the British side makes unilateral changes to the relevant practice, it will breach its own position and pledges as well as international law and basic norms governing international relations,” it said in a statement.

“We oppose this and reserve the right to take corresponding measures,” it said.

Beijing has never publicly raised the possibility of offering Britons either Chinese citizenship or broader residence rights.

Britain had sought closer relations with China after ending its decades-long membership in the European Union this year.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson’s government also irritated the U.S in January by allowing private Chinese company Huawei to unroll Britain’s speedy new data network. But Britain is now studying ways to cut Huawei out of its system entirely and build up an alliance of European and Asian providers that reduces China’s dominance in the field.

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