



BRIEFING PAPER

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UK-China relations: a timeline

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Summary

This paper provides a timeline of notable events in relations between the UK and China.

It covers the key dates surrounding the handover in 1997, as well as more recent events, such as the concern over Huawei's involvement in the UK's 5G network and disagreements over China's imposition of a new national security law in Hong Kong.

This paper will be updated periodically.

For analysis of the bilateral relationship, see Commons Briefing Paper CBP-9004, [The UK-China relationship](#) (14 September 2020).

1. Pre-1997 handover

Key events

- 1 July 1898:** The UK leases the New Territories from China, for a period of 99 years.
- 13 March 1972:** The UK and China agree to establish full diplomatic ties.
- 19 December 1984:** The Sino-British Joint Declaration is signed.
- 12-18 October 1986:** Queen Elizabeth II and the Duke of Edinburgh pay a State Visit to China, the first such visit by a British sovereign.
- 30 June 1997:** At midnight, Hong Kong returns to Chinese sovereignty.

1 July 1898	The UK leases the New Territories from China, together with 235 islands, for 99 years from this day.
13 March 1972	The UK and China agree to establish full diplomatic ties with the exchange of Ambassadors, signalling their commitment to a strong and constructive bilateral relationship.
29 March 1979	Deng Xiaoping meets Murray MacLehose, the Governor of Hong Kong, in Beijing. The issue of Hong Kong is raised and Deng says China will reassert sovereignty over the "special region" after 30 June 1997.
April 1982	The UK and China begin talks on the future of Hong Kong. Edward Heath, the UK's special envoy, meets Deng Xiaoping. Deng tells Heath that China will rule Hong Kong under a "one country, two systems" policy from 1997.
22 September 1982	UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher makes her first visit to China to discuss Hong Kong's future.
19 December 1984	After four months of talks, the Sino-British Joint Declaration is signed in Beijing. This sets the conditions under which Hong Kong will revert to Chinese rule and officially become a Chinese territory. The "one country, two systems" formula will see Hong Kong retain its partially democratic political system and its capitalist economic system for a further 50 years after the handover.

27 May 1985	The Sino-British Joint Declaration is ratified.
12-18 October 1986	Queen Elizabeth II and the Duke of Edinburgh pay a State Visit to China, the first such visit by a British sovereign.
April 1989	Protesters gather in Tiananmen Square, Beijing, calling for greater freedom of speech and less censorship, in demonstrations that will continue for several weeks.
4-5 June 1989	Chinese troops open fire in Tiananmen Square, killing and arresting protesters to regain control of the area. The Chinese Government says approximately 200 people died, but later-released diplomatic cables from then British Ambassador to China, Sir Alan Donald, report 10,000 deaths.
26 June 1989	The European Council of Ministers agree to an arms embargo of China, part of a set of EU-wide diplomatic and economic sanctions intended to signal disapproval of Chinese actions in Tiananmen Square.
9 July 1992	Hong Kong Governor Chris Patten takes up his post as Hong Kong's last governor, to oversee the colony's handover to China.
October 1992	Chris Patten announces proposals for democratic reform in Hong Kong's institutions, to broaden the voting base in elections. China, having not been consulted, responds by threatening to tear up business contracts and overturn the reforms after the handover.
22 April 1993	Several months after the last talks on the future of Hong Kong took place, the UK and China resume negotiations.
June 1994	After almost two years of discussions, Hong Kong's legislature introduces a reduced version of Chris Patten's democratic reform package. This new legislation widens the franchise but falls short of providing for universal suffrage.
26 September 1996	The UK and China agree arrangements for the handover ceremony.
30 June 1997	At midnight, Hong Kong returns to Chinese sovereignty after 156 years of British control.

2. 1997 handover – 2016

Key events

8-10 November 2005: President Hu Jintao pays a State Visit to the UK.

29 October 2008: The Foreign Secretary announces an updated legal stance on Tibet, abandoning the UK's longstanding position that Tibet was under the "suzerainty" of China and recognising for the first time that Tibet is part of China.

9-10 November 2010: The Prime Minister leads a large Ministerial delegation to China.

14 May 2012: The Prime Minister meets the Dalai Lama, provoking an angry response from the Chinese Government and a cessation of Ministerial-level visits for 18 months.

20-23 October 2015: President Xi Jinping pays a State Visit to the UK.

1 July 1997	Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa and the Provisional Legislative Council are sworn in.
10 May 1999	Prime Minister Tony Blair meets the Dalai Lama in London, although it is reported that no political issues were discussed.
19-22 October 1999	Chinese President Jiang Zemin and Madame Wang Yeping pay a State Visit to the UK.
February 2001	Hong Kong's Deputy Chief Executive Anson Chan, a former deputy to Chris Patten and one of the key figures within the Hong Kong administration to oppose Chinese interference in the territory's affairs, resigns under pressure from Beijing. She is replaced by Donald Tsang.
July 2004	The UK accuses China of interfering in Hong Kong's constitutional reform process, saying Beijing's manner is inconsistent with the self-governance guarantees agreed before the handover.
8-10 November 2005	President Hu Jintao and Madame Liu Yongqing pay a State Visit to the UK.
10 March 2008	In Tibet, anti-government protests break out. Days later, violence breaks out between Chinese security forces and protestors wielding iron bars. Armed police use water cannons and teargas on the crowds. Thousands of armed police lock down monasteries in and around the Tibetan capital, Lhasa.

23 March 2008 At the same time protests are ongoing in Tibet, ethnic unrest commences on a second front, in Xinjiang, where Uighur Muslims begin protests against Chinese rule. The protests raise awareness of the human rights concerns of the Uighur population, with UK politicians beginning to show an interest.

Amnesty International [criticises](#) the Chinese government for its crackdown on protests in Tibetan areas of China and says the country's efforts to silence dissidents before the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing violates the government's pledges to improve human rights before the Games.

April 2008 The UK-China Economic and Financial Dialogue is established.

23 May 2008 Prime Minister Gordon Brown [meets](#) the Dalai Lama and pledges to help encourage reconciliation between China and the people of Tibet.

Downing Street describes the 30-minute meeting with the Tibetan spiritual leader, held behind closed doors at Lambeth Palace, the Archbishop of Canterbury's London residence, as "warm and constructive".

29 October 2008 In a [Written Statement](#), Foreign Secretary David Miliband announces an updated legal stance on Tibet, abandoning the UK's longstanding position that Tibet was under the "suzerainty" of China and recognising for the first time that Tibet is part of China.

The move comes just months after violent protests were seen in Tibet.

9-10 November 2010 David Cameron leads the biggest combined visit to date by a UK Ministerial team to China.

Dozens of business leaders accompany the delegation to the UK China Summit.

During the visit, a UK-China Energy Dialogue is established.

Speaking at Beijing's Beida University, David Cameron [says](#) the UK wants 'a strong relationship with China'.

10 December 2010 In a statement to mark International Human Rights Day, the Foreign Secretary [sends a message of support](#) to human rights defenders around the world, including the Chinese Nobel Peace Prize winner Liu Xiaobo, who had been imprisoned a year earlier on charges of inciting subversion of state power. The statement called for his release.

9-12 January 2011 Chinese Vice-Premier Li Keqiang visits the UK. UK Foreign Secretary William Hague [says](#):

I see this visit as another important step in cementing the UK and China as "Partners for Growth" and continuing to build our trade and investment relationship.

25-27 June 2011 Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao visits the UK and attends the UK-China Strategic Summit.

At a Downing Street press conference, Mr Wen airs his frustration at the way in which the UK Government and media seem to obsess about human rights, [saying](#):

On human rights, China and the UK should respect each other, respect the facts, treat each other as equals, engage in more co-operation than finger-pointing and resolve our differences through dialogue. China is not only pursuing economic development but also political structural reform and improvement in democracy and the rule of law.

David Cameron says:

We applaud the economic transformation that has taken place in China ... But, as I said in Beijing last November, we do believe the best guarantor of prosperity and stability is for economic and political progress to go in step together.

15 September 2011 Foreign Secretary William Hague addresses the UK-China Leadership Forum in London, as the group celebrates its fifth year.

5 December 2011 Pandas Tian Tian and Yang Guang arrive in the UK, on loan to Edinburgh Zoo from China. Foreign Office Minister Jeremy Browne [says](#) 'the loan symbolises a strengthening of our relationship with China.'

14 May 2012 David Cameron and Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg meet the Dalai Lama in private at St Paul's Cathedral, following a ceremony in which the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader received the Templeton Prize.

The meeting provokes an angry response from China and the UK's Ambassador in Beijing, Sebastian Wood, is summoned to China's Foreign Ministry and told British leaders should consider the "serious consequences" of meeting the Dalai Lama.

At a news conference in Beijing, foreign ministry spokesman Hong Lei [says](#):

We ask the British side to take the Chinese side's solemn stance seriously, stop indulging and supporting 'Tibet independence' anti-China forces, immediately take effective measures to undo the adverse effect, and take concrete action to safeguard the overall development of China-UK relations.

Reprisals are instantaneous and Ministerial-level visits between the two countries are stopped. This continues for almost 18 months until November 2013, when David Cameron once again visits China, though to a somewhat lukewarm reception.

12 September 2012 The Prime Minister and Ren Zhengfei, founder and CEO of Huawei, [meet](#) to confirm a £1.3 billion investment in the UK over the next five years.

17 December 2012 Foreign Office Minister Hugo Swire [says](#) the UK has serious concerns about human rights in Tibet.

21 March 2013 David Cameron [calls](#) China's Premier Li Keqiang to congratulate him on his recent appointment.

6 June 2013 Responding to the UK Parliament's report on Foreign Investment in Critical National Infrastructure, Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne emphasises that the UK is open to Chinese investment.

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14-18 October 2013	Speaking to students at Peking University on the first day of his visit to China, Chancellor George Osborne says he wants Britain to celebrate and share in China's economic progress.
2-4 December 2013	David Cameron visits China on a trade mission and holds talks with China's President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Keqiang. Mr Cameron gives a speech on the UK and China's long-term relationship.
27-28 February 2014	UK Foreign Secretary William Hague and China's State Councillor Yang Jiechi hold talks in London on foreign policy and security.
10 May 2014	Foreign Office Minister Hugo Swire speaks in support of the EU statement on tensions in the South China Sea and urges all parties to exercise restraint and seek to de-escalate the situation.
17-19 June 2014	Chinese Premier Li Keqiang and Madame Cheng Hong visit the UK and meet with Queen Elizabeth II and Prime Minister David Cameron. This is the first visit to the UK by a Chinese premier since David Cameron met the Dalai Lama in May 2012. A joint statement from the UK and Chinese Governments is issued and the Prime Minister and Premier Li hold a press conference in Downing Street.
23 September 2014	The UK expresses concern after Uighur academic Dr Ilham Tohti is sentenced to life imprisonment in China.
28 September 2014	The pro-democracy Umbrella protest movement breaks out in Hong Kong.
2 December 2014	In an emergency debate in the House of Commons, MPs consider the ban imposed by China on the Commons Foreign Affairs Committee visit to Hong Kong.

12 March 2015 UK Chancellor George Osborne [announces](#) the UK intention to join the China-instigated Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), the first major Western country to seek membership.

In response, the administration of then US President Barack Obama [accuses](#) the UK of a “constant accommodation” of China.

12-13 August 2015 Philip Hammond [visits](#) China, his first since becoming Foreign Secretary.

On the first day of his visit, Mr Hammond [speaks](#) at Peking University in Beijing, outlining the UK-China relationship.

22 September 2015 Chancellor of the Exchequer, George Osborne, delivers a speech to the Shanghai Stock Exchange in China and speaks of “a golden era” for the UK-China relationship, thought to be the first time the phrase was used.

20-23 October 2015 President Xi Jinping and Madame Peng Liyuan pay a [State Visit](#) to the UK.

In an [interview](#) on BBC Radio 4’s Today programme, Philip Hammond says the UK has its ‘eyes wide open’ about China:

I don’t think we are I. It’s very much in our national interest to engage with China but we do so with our eyes wide open.

I think we are developing a mature relationship with the Chinese. They know that we are looking not just to China but to many other countries for infrastructure investment in the UK.

On the second day of the State Visit, Prime Minister David Cameron and President Xi Jinping hold a [joint press conference](#).

5-6 January 2016 Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond undertakes an official visit to China, his second in six months, and [speaks](#) about the relationship between the two nations.

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- 8 April 2016 On the first step of a tour of East Asia, Philip Hammond visits Hong Kong, the first visit by a UK Foreign Secretary in over five years.
- Mr Hammond meets Chief Executive CY Leung and the Chief Justice during his visit, and [reinstates](#) the UK's commitment as co-signatory to the Joint Declaration:
- From Hong Kong, Mr Hammond travels to Beijing for a meeting with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi.
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- 15 August 2016 Alok Sharma travels to Beijing, Shenzhen and Guangzhou in his first official visit to China since being appointed UK Minister for Asia.
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- 20 December 2016 UK Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson hosts Chinese State Councillor Yang Jiechi for annual foreign policy [talks](#).
- Mr Yang later [meets](#) Prime Minister Theresa May, who "reaffirmed her commitment to developing a genuine strategic partnership in this 'golden era' of bilateral relations."
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3. 2017 – 2018

Key events

29 June 2017: The Foreign Secretary marks 20 years since the Hong Kong handover and stresses the UK's commitment to Hong Kong and the importance of the Joint Declaration.

4 July 2017: The Princess Royal visits China to mark the 45th Anniversary of UK-China Ambassadorial ties.

29 January – 1 February 2018: The Prime Minister visits China and meets Premier Xi Jinping.

16 February 2017 In a visit to Beijing, Minister for Asia Alok Sharma [meets](#) Chinese Assistant Foreign Ministers Liu Haixing and Kong Xuanyou, for wide-ranging political talks to strengthen the global partnership between the UK and China.

17 February 2017 Sir Mark Lyall Grant, the UK's National Security Adviser, [hosts](#) Wang Yongqing, Secretary-General of the Central Commission for Politics and Law, for the second UK-China High Level Security Dialogue. Sir Mark later says:

Security cooperation with China is an important part of our global partnership and is in both countries national interest.

Secretary-General Wang and I agreed to strengthen UK-China cooperation in a number of priority areas.

27 March 2017 British Consul General to Hong Kong, Andrew Heyn, issues a [statement](#) to congratulate Hong Kong's next Chief Executive on her appointment and to reaffirm the UK's longstanding commitment to the Joint Declaration.

29 March 2017 Minister for Asia Alok Sharma [hosts](#) an event to mark the 45th anniversary year of ambassadorial relations between the UK and China.

Over 300 guests attend the event at Lancaster House, including the Chinese Ambassador to the UK, Liu Xiaoming.

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27 June 2017	Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson tables a Written Statement on the 20 th anniversary of the establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, noting that “the ‘one country, two systems’ principle is functioning well in the vast majority of areas.”
29 June 2017	Boris Johnson marks 20 years since the Hong Kong handover, saying : I want to stress that Britain’s commitment to Hong Kong – enshrined in the Joint Declaration with China – is just as strong today as it was 20 years ago.
4-7 July 2017	The Princess Royal visits China to mark the 45 th Anniversary of UK-China Ambassadorial ties.
13 July 2017	Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson comments on the death of Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Liu Xiaobo, expressing deep sadness for the loss.
25 September 2017	Prime Minister Theresa May speaks to President Xi to discuss trade, security cooperation and North Korea. They agree “the UK and China should continue to consolidate the ‘Golden Era’ of bilateral relations and deepen our strategic partnership.”
8 December 2017	Chinese Vice Premier Liu Yandong meets Prime Minister Theresa May and the Princess Royal during the UK-China People to People Dialogue.
29 January – 1 February 2018	Prime Minister Theresa May visits China on a trade mission and meets China’s premier Xi Jinping. To mark the visit, Liu Xiaoming, China’s Ambassador to the UK, writes in the Daily Telegraph, describing this “Golden Era” of China-UK relations. At the end of the visit, Prime Minister May and Premier Li hold a press conference .
19 April 2018	Theresa May speaks to President Xi to discuss a range of matters.
22-26 July 2018	Foreign Office Minister Mark Field visits China to “support the Golden Era of UK-China relations”.

30 July 2018 Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt [visits](#) China for meetings with his Chinese counterpart and to further enhance UK-China relations.

20 December 2018 The UK and allies reveal the global scale of a Chinese cyber campaign, [announcing](#) that a group known as APT 10 acted on behalf of the Chinese Ministry of State Security to carry out a malicious cyber campaign targeting intellectual property and sensitive commercial data in Europe, Asia and the US.

4. 2019

Key events

10 April 2019: The Minister for Asia expresses concern over the arrests of pro-democracy activists in Hong Kong.

10 June 2019: The Minister for Asia responds to an Urgent Question on the impact of the Hong Kong extradition law on the Sino-British joint declaration.

1 October 2019: Commenting on protests in Hong Kong, the Foreign Secretary urges 'restraint and a de-escalation from both protestors and the Hong Kong authorities'.

15 March 2019	The UK expresses concern over the situation in Xinjiang and urges China to release detainees who have not been lawfully charged or tried, and to end travel restrictions on minorities.
4 April 2019	The Commons Foreign Affairs Committee expresses concern that Hong Kong is moving towards " one country, one-and-a-half systems ".
10 April 2019	The Minister for Asia, Mark Field, responds to an Urgent Question on the arrests of pro-democracy activists in Hong Kong and says it is essential that the right to freedom of assembly and demonstration is properly respected in a democracy.
25 April 2019	Jeremy Wright, Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, responds to an Urgent Question on the future role of Huawei in the UK telecoms market, stating a final decision is yet to be made.
4 June 2019	In a statement to mark the 30th anniversary of the events in and around Tiananmen Square, Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt urges the Chinese Government "to respect citizens' freedom of association, assembly, expression and other fundamental rights and freedoms, as enshrined in China's constitution and in international law."
10 June 2019	Minister for Asia, Mark Field, responds to an Urgent Question on the impact of the Hong Kong extradition law on the Sino-British joint declaration.

12 June 2019

In an [interview](#) for BBC's Newsnight, the Chinese Ambassador to the UK, Liu Xiaoming, discusses China's position on matters relating Hong Kong, Xinjiang and Huawei.

Responding to questions on the Sino-British Joint Declaration, Mr Liu disputes the continuing importance of the joint declaration, saying: "It is an historic document. It completed its mission."

When asked about the possibility of the UK Government not opting for Huawei involvement in its 5G networks, Mr Liu says such a decision "would send a very bad message."

13 June 2019

The Minister for Asia [updates](#) the Commons on the latest developments in Hong Kong, concluding:

I once again call on the Hong Kong Government to pause, to reflect and to take meaningful steps to address the concerns of the people, businesses, the legal professionals, judges and the international community about the proposed changes to the extradition law. We must, and we shall, continue to press them so to do.

18 June 2019

Mark Field, responds to an [Urgent Question](#) on the subject of democracy and protests in Hong Kong and reiterates the UK Government's position.

26 June 2019

Responding to Written Question on the compatibility of the Government of Hong Kong's proposed extradition law with the Sino-British Joint Declaration, the UK Government [says](#):

If at some stage in the future we were to take the view that China had breached its obligations under the Joint Declaration, this would, under international law, be a bilateral matter between us and China and we would pursue it accordingly.

30 June 2019	In a statement to mark the 22nd anniversary of the handover of Hong Kong, Jeremy Hunt comments on the recent protests in Hong Kong and reiterates the UK Government's commitment to the Sino-British Joint Declaration.
2 July 2019	Foreign Office Minister Sir Alan Duncan responds to an Urgent Question on the previous day's protests in Hong Kong and rejects the Chinese Government's assertion that the joint declaration is an "historic document".
3 July 2019	In PMQs, Theresa May responds to a question on Hong Kong, saying: "it is vital that Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy and the rights and freedoms set down in the Sino-British Joint Declaration are respected".
22 July 2019	<p>Jeremy Wright gives a statement to the Commons, updating MPs on the Telecoms Supply Chain Review.</p> <p>He explains why the Government is not yet in a position to decide what involvement Huawei should have in the provision of the UK's 5G network.</p> <p>Foreign Office Minister Dr Andrew Murrison responds to an Urgent Question on continuing protests in Hong Kong.</p>
29 August 2019	The UK, France and Germany issue a joint statement on the situation in the South China Sea, welcoming the on-going negotiations between the ASEAN member States and China.

26 September 2019 Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab responds to an [Urgent Question](#) on the continuing protests in Hong Kong.

British Ambassador to China Dame Barbara Woodward's [writes](#) an op-ed on UK-China cooperation on global challenges, noting:

We will continue to work closely with China to address the global challenges facing our citizens and the world. Next year, at the UN's 75th anniversary, we hope to be able to celebrate progress in tackling the world's challenges bringing us a step closer to a peaceful, secure and prosperous world.

1 October 2019 Commenting on the protests in Hong Kong, Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab [urges](#) "restraint and a de-escalation from both protestors and the Hong Kong authorities".

29 October 2019 In the United Nations, the UK leads 22 other Member States in [condemning](#) China over its detention of Uighur Muslims.

20 November 2019 Dominic Raab gives a [statement](#) on the detention and mistreatment of Simon Cheng, a former member of staff at the British Consulate Hong Kong.

19 December 2019 The Foreign Secretary gives a statement marking the 35th anniversary of the Sino British Joint Declaration.

Reflecting on the current situation in Hong Kong, Mr Raab [says](#):

Hong Kong is experiencing its greatest period of turmoil since the handover. As a co-signatory of the Joint Declaration, the UK takes these commitments seriously and supports their implementation through the 'One Country, Two Systems' framework. The only way to guarantee Hong Kong's future success and stability is by respecting these and addressing the legitimate concerns of the people of Hong Kong through meaningful political dialogue.

5. 2020

Key events

28 January 2020: The Foreign Office advises against all but essential travel to mainland China in response to the ongoing coronavirus outbreak.

2 June 2020: The Foreign Secretary speaks about the proposed national security law in Hong Kong, saying it “undermines the ‘one country two systems’ framework.”

29 June 2020: The Minister for Asia expresses his concern at the human rights situation in Xinjiang.

1 July 2020: The Foreign Secretary expresses concern at the imposition of national security legislation in Hong Kong and confirms the UK is committed to changing the arrangements for those holding British national (overseas) status.

6 July 2020: China’s Ambassador to the UK warns of consequences if the UK rejects Huawei’s involvement in the UK’s 5G network.

14 July 2020: The UK Government commits to the removal of Huawei equipment from the UK’s 5G network by 2027.

16 July 2020: China’s Ambassador warns “it’s very dangerous for the UK to challenge China’s sovereignty and support the anti-China forces seeking to disrupt Hong Kong.”

20 July 2020: The Foreign Secretary announces that the long-standing arms embargo affecting mainland China is to be extended to also cover Hong Kong.

22 July 2020: The Home Secretary sets out the Government’s plans for a new Hong Kong British national (overseas) (BN(O)) visa and provides additional detail on the suspension of the UK’s extradition treaty with Hong Kong.

5 January 2020

[Writing](#) in the Sunday Telegraph, China’s Ambassador to the UK considers three questions:

- 1 is Huawei safe?
- 2 what has Huawei done for China-UK relations?
- 3 what would be the consequence of banning Huawei in Britain?

27 January 2020

Matt Warman, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, responds to an [Urgent Question](#) on the 5G network and Huawei.

28 January 2020	<p>Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab gives a Statement to the Commons on UK telecommunications and Huawei, expanding on the previous day's statement in outlining the main areas of the review of the supply arrangements for 5G and full-fibre networks. Mr Raab says Huawei will be allowed to own up to 35% of the less sensitive parts of the future 5G network.</p> <p>Responding to the ongoing coronavirus outbreak, the Foreign Office advises against all but essential travel to mainland China.</p>
4 February 2020	<p>Expanding on the travel restrictions between the UK and China, the Foreign Secretary advises British nationals in China to leave the country if they can.</p> <p>The Foreign Office charters civilian aircraft to assist with repatriation efforts.</p>
18 February 2020	<p>Prime Minister Boris Johnson speaks to President Xi of China and offers his sympathies to those affected by the outbreak of coronavirus.</p> <p>The Prime Minister and President Xi agree on the importance of the UK-China relationship and resolve to work together across a range of issues, including strengthening the economic partnership, to benefit the people of both nations.</p>
5 March 2020	<p>Foreign Office Minister Nigel Adams meets China's Ambassador to the UK Liu Xiaoming, to discuss UK-China relations and common concerns.</p>
16 April 2020	<p>Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab says that the UK-China relationship could not go back to "business as usual" once the coronavirus pandemic was over and that the international community would want answers from Beijing about its handling of the outbreak.</p>
25 April 2020	<p>A group of Conservative MPs establish a "China Research Group" (CRG), to "consider the longer term challenges associated with the rise of China and its industrial and diplomatic policies".</p>

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22 May 2020	UK Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab, Australian Foreign Minister Marise Payne and Canadian Foreign Minister François-Philippe Champagne, issue a joint statement responding to China's proposed new security law for Hong Kong.
28 May 2020	The UK, Australia, Canada, and United States give a joint statement in response to the proposed new security law.
2 June 2020	<p>Dominic Raab gives a Statement in the House of Commons on the situation in Hong Kong and the UK's response to the Hong Kong National Security Legislation.</p> <p>Speaking about the proposed national security law, Mr Raab says it "undermines the one country two systems framework under which Hong Kong is guaranteed a high degree of autonomy with executive, legislative and independent judicial powers."</p>
7 June 2020	The Sunday Times reports China's Ambassador to the UK, Liu Xiaoming, signalled in a recent briefing that the decision over Huawei was being seen in Beijing as "a litmus test of whether Britain is a true and faithful partner of China".
11 June 2020	In remarks widely viewed as a warning, China's Ambassador to the UK, Liu Xiaoming, urges Chinese students coming to the UK to "leverage your strength" and "serve your motherland".
17 June 2020	The G7 nations issue a joint statement to stress the international community's grave concern at China's decision to impose a national security law on Hong Kong.

29 June 2020

Minister for Asia Nigel Adams responds to an [Urgent Question](#) on 'the mistreatment by the Chinese Government of Uighurs in Xinjiang province'.

Mr Adams expresses his concern at the broader human rights situation in Xinjiang, adding:

This includes the extrajudicial detention of over a million Uyghur Muslims and other minorities in political re-education camps, systematic restrictions on Uyghur culture and the practice of Islam, and extensive and invasive surveillance targeting minorities. Further reports indicating that forced labour is being used and that children are being forcibly separated from their parents add to the growing body of evidence about the disturbing situation that Uyghurs and other minorities are facing in Xinjiang.

30 June 2020

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab [comments](#) on the passage of national security legislation for Hong Kong through the National People's Congress in Beijing.

UK Ambassador to the WTO and UN in Geneva, Julian Braithwaite, delivers a [joint statement](#) on behalf of 27 countries, expressing concern over the "arbitrary detention, widespread surveillance and restrictions, particularly targeting Uyghurs and other minorities in Xinjiang."

1 July 2020

Dominic Raab gives a [Statement](#) to the House of Commons on the situation in Hong Kong, following the imposition of national security legislation by China.

6 July 2020

Liu Xiaoming, China's Ambassador to the UK, warns of consequences if the UK rejects Huawei's involvement in the UK's 5G phone networks.

Speaking to reporters during a video conference, Mr Liu [says](#):

We want to be your friend. We want to be your partner. But if you want to make China a hostile country, you will have to bear the consequences.

- 9 July 2020 Liu Xiaoming holds an [online press conference](#) on the new national security law in Hong Kong.
-
- 14 July 2020 Oliver Dowden, the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, gives a [Statement](#) to the Commons on UK telecommunications and the role of Huawei in providing 5G technology.
- Mr Dowden addresses security concerns and explains the Government has concluded that “it is necessary, and indeed prudent, to commit to a timetable for the removal of Huawei equipment from our 5G network by 2027”.
-
- 16 July 2020 In an [interview](#) with The Times, Ambassador Liu Xiaoming states: “It’s very dangerous for the UK to challenge China’s sovereignty and support the anti-China forces seeking to disrupt Hong Kong.”
- When answering a question about the UK offering citizenship to BNO passport holders and the creation of a so-called ‘Hong Kong parliament in exile’, Mr Liu says:
- If the UK permits them to set up this so-called ‘parliament in exile’, the UK would violate its commitment to abiding by the basic norms governing international relations, i.e. to respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity. That will be another serious problem between China and the UK.
-
- 19 July 2020 Lisa Nandy, shadow foreign secretary, calls on the Government to [introduce sanctions](#) against Chinese individuals responsible for human rights abuses against the Uighurs under the UK’s new Magnitsky legislation.
-

20 July 2020	<p>Dominic Raab makes a Statement in the House of Commons to update Members on the latest developments with respect to China and, in particular, Hong Kong.</p> <p>Mr Raab announces two further measures the UK Government is taking in response to the imposition of the new national security law in Hong Kong:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1 the UK will extend to Hong Kong the arms embargo that has applied to mainland China since 19892 the UK will suspend its extradition treaty with Hong Kong immediately and indefinitely
22 July 2020	<p>Home Secretary Priti Patel gives a Statement to the Commons to “set out here the Government’s plans for a new Hong Kong British national (overseas) (BN(O)) visa and for the suspension of our extradition treaty with Hong Kong.”</p>
23 July 2020	<p>China responds to the Home Secretary’s statement by announcing that it may no longer consider a BN(O) passport as a valid travel document, potentially blocking the future ability of holders to travel from Hong Kong to the UK.</p>
28 July 2020	<p>The Foreign Secretary speaks to Chinese Foreign Minister, Wang Yi, and reiterates the UK Government’s hopes to maintain a good relationship between the two countries, whilst also urging China to uphold its international human rights obligations.</p>
30 July 2020	<p>In a press conference, Chinese Ambassador Liu says the relationship between the UK and China has been “seriously poisoned” and that the UK was at a “critical historical juncture” in its future with his country.</p>

31 July 2020

The Foreign Office issues a [statement](#) in response to the postponement of the Legislative Council elections in Hong Kong, saying:

Free and fair elections are essential to the high degree of autonomy and rights and freedoms guaranteed in the Sino-British Joint Declaration.

The Chinese government will need to reassure the people of Hong Kong and the world that elections will be held as soon as possible, and that they are not using COVID as a pretext to further undermine the autonomy of Hong Kong.

9 August 2020

The UK joins with four other countries in [condemning the disqualification](#) of 12 pro-democracy candidates from standing in Legislative Council elections. The elections have been postponed until September 2021.

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