



Events, dear boy, events Yoga at Tibbiwell Alpacas in Gloucestershire, carnival queens in Margate and a graduation ceremony at the University of the Arts London featured in the Event Photography Awards

# Raab condemns Hong Kong expulsions

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Britain accused China of a “clear breach” of its legally binding international commitments after Beijing ordered the expulsion of members of Hong Kong’s parliament, prompting the mass resignation of the pro-democracy opposition.

The Foreign Office summoned the Chinese ambassador “to register our deep concern at this latest action by his government” and Dominic Raab, the foreign secretary, vowed that Britain would work with its allies to hold China to its obligations under the Sino-British joint declaration, guaranteeing Hong Kong’s separate governing system following its handover.

“China has once again broken its promises and undermined Hong Kong’s high degree of autonomy,” he said.

“The UK will stand up for the people of Hong Kong and call out violations of their rights and freedoms. With our international partners, we will hold China to the obligations it freely assumed under international law.”

Mr Raab spoke as Hong Kong’s entire pro-democracy caucus resigned in parliament in protest at Beijing’s order to disqualify four “unpatriotic” opposition legislators.

One of the MPs marked his departure by hanging banners denouncing Carrie Lam, Hong Kong’s chief executive, who has supported the ruling from Beijing’s highest legislative body.

“Carrie Lam, the scourge of Hong Kong and its people,” read one banner, unfurled by Lam Cheuk-ting. A second said: “Carrie Lam: the stench of rot will last for an age.”

The Chinese government reacted angrily to the announcement by 15 pro-democracy MPs that they would resign, following the expulsion of Dennis Kwok, Kwok Ka-ki, Alvin Yeung and Kenneth Leung.

In a statement, the Hong Kong and

## Quentin Letts Lam-basters spoil element of surprise

Political  
Sketch



**K**eep this to yourselves but MPs called for leading figures in Hong Kong to be whacked with Magnitsky laws. Carrie Lam, the city’s chief executive, was mentioned as someone who might merit treatment under property-seizing powers to punish human-rights abusers. But shush! Nigel Adams, Foreign Office minister, did not want this bandied about too much. Ms Lam’s accountant might hear about it and shift assets offshore before Whitehall’s finest finish sucking their pencils.

Layla Moran (Lib Dem, Oxford West & Abingdon) was given an urgent question on the latest anti-democratic outrages in Hong Kong. Four members of the legislative council have been booted out of that

parliament for supporting Hong Kong independence. Beijing decided they were “unpatriotic”. Mr Adams, a Yorkshireman, weren’t impressed. “It is my unfortunate duty,” he said, with a tweak of the neck and a slight easing of the gases, “to report our judgment that the decision breaches the legally binding Sino-British joint declaration.” Mr Adams speaks slowly when excited, even less fast when unchuffed. Yesterday he could have been overtaken by the Marmolada glacier.

Others were hotter to trot. Tom Tugendhat (C, Tonbridge & Malling) said Beijing “really does believe in ‘one man, one vote’, and that man, of course, is Chairman Xi”. Well that’s the last time he gets a tourist visa for China. Sir Iain Duncan Smith (C, Chingford & Woodford Green) is another who should not count on visiting the pandas near Chengdu too soon. He called China “an arrogant country led by an arrogant leadership

that is guilty of huge human rights abuses and dangerous confrontations with its neighbours”.

Like Ms Moran, Sir Iain wanted Magnitsky sanctions. “Let’s start with Carrie Lam.” Mr Adams all but put an index finger to his lips. “It is not appropriate to speculate who may be designated,” he hissed. “It may well reduce the impact.” After several more answers like this, Alistair Carmichael (Lib Dem, Orkney & Shetland) broke it to Mr Adams that as far as hitting Ms Lam with sanctions, “maybe we’ve now lost the element of surprise”. But will anything ever happen? Mr Adams disclosed that “trade with China is absolutely pivotal and crucial to the UK and over the last six months China is only one of two countries where our exports have actually grown”. Unusually candid.

For the Scots Nats, naturally, it was all about Scottish independence. Who, argued Steven Bonnar (SNP, Coatbridge, Chryston & Bellshill), could blame Beijing for giving up on democracy when they beheld the brutal mistreatment of the Scots by their colonial oppressors in London? By the way, Margaret Ferrier (ex-SNP, Rutherglen & Hamilton West) was back in action after her Covid-

spreading adventures. Could we not send her to the Far East to shake a few hands?

The Conservative Party co-chairman, Amanda Milling, appeared during Cabinet Office questions to assure the nation that “the government is doubling down on levelling up”. The house blinked.

And the culture secretary, Oliver “Olive” Dowden, arrived with a clap of hands and a Herbert’s smile to discuss the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee in 2022. There was a small outbreak of red-carpet fever. If you’re not careful this sort of thing can spread like Covid. “Seventy years in one job!” exclaimed John Nicolson (SNP, Ochil & South Perthshire). I’m not sure she sees it as a “job”. Mr Dowden was in his element but he really is as wet as a moorhen. The Duke of Edinburgh, in his prime, would have scared the life out of him. You dread to think what the 41-gun salute will do to Olive’s nerves.

After Sir Edward Leigh (C, Gainsborough) observed he had not known another queen in his 70 years. Chris Bryant piped up his commiserations. “I,” announced Bryant, “have known quite a few queens in my time. And some of them have been members of royal families.”

Macao Affairs Office, Beijing’s representative, said: “The announcement [of the resignations] is a blatant challenge to the central power... We would like to warn these opposition members that if they want to use this to encourage radical resistance and beg for intervention from outside forces to drag Hong Kong into chaos again, that is a wrong calculation.”

It was unclear what action Britain was planning. In a phone call with Joe Biden, the US president-elect, Boris Johnson briefly discussed plans for an alliance of democratic nations to counter Beijing.

The four MPs were forced out after a resolution by a committee of the National People’s Congress (NPC) disqualifying from office anyone who supports Hong Kong’s independence, questions Chinese sovereignty, encourages foreign interference in the territory or endangers national security.

They were accused of calling for foreign sanctions on Hong Kong, one of a number of crimes set out in the harsh national security law imposed in June.

Despite majority support in Hong Kong, democracy forces always have a minority in the Hong Kong assembly because half of its seats go to appointees rather than elected representatives.

They have concluded now that their continuing presence would lend credibility to a body that serves only to give legitimacy to the diktats from Beijing.

Robert O’Brien, the US national security adviser, said that “one country, two systems” was “now merely a fig leaf-covering for the Chinese Communist Party’s expanding one-party dictatorship in Hong Kong.”

On Facebook, Lam Cheuk-ting wrote: “Today, some people may feel discouraged and sad, thinking that this battle is over, but we must firmly believe that even if the night is long, the light will always come. As long as we persist, there is hope. History tells us that in the face of dictatorship, victory ultimately belongs to the people.”