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Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said he certified to Congress Wednesday that Hong Kong no longer enjoys a high degree of autonomy from China -- a decision that could result in the loss of Hong Kong's special trading status with the US and threaten its standing as an international financial hub.

President Donald Trump and Congress will decide what actions to take as a result of the certification which comes at a time of increased tensions with Beijing as the two countries trade barbs over the coronavirus pandemic. Ending a special trading relationship that has existed for decades would carry costs for American business, rattle an already fragile global economy and hurt Hong Kong more than China, experts warn.

"The State Department is required by the Hong Kong Policy Act to assess the autonomy of the territory from China. After careful study of developments over the reporting period, I certified to Congress today that Hong Kong does not continue to warrant treatment under United States laws in the same manner as U.S. laws were applied to Hong Kong before July 1997," he said in a statement. "No reasonable person can assert today that Hong Kong maintains a high degree of autonomy from China, given facts on the ground."

autonomy 自治權 hub 中心 trade barbs 針鋒相對