

Transcript of remarks by CE at media session

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, at a media session this afternoon (June 18):

Reporter: Mrs Lam, on Wednesday you personally said the distressing scene in Admiralty area was a blatant, organised riot and in no way an act of loving Hong Kong. So today are you backtracking on what you said on Wednesday, or are you deciding to stick with the Police Commissioner's statements? And number two, just now you said Hong Kong needs a government to deliver on social and economic policies, but do you realise that you are now leading a lame-duck government? And if you had a choice, would you choose to step down and not seek another term? Thank you.

Chief Executive: First of all, the statement that I made on Wednesday evening was entirely based on the assessment and report on the ground. In other words, the Chief Executive has not, and should not, made her own assessment of the situation on the ground. There is no difference between myself and the Commissioner of Police, especially after his clarification last evening that the term "riot" was referring to the behaviour of some of those protesters, especially those who were using violence and trying to storm into the Legislative Council building. So throughout, whether it is on Wednesday evening or today standing here, my position is totally aligned with the Commissioner of Police.

The second point, also related to governance, we have a lot of social and economic issues that we have committed to, let alone introducing more new initiatives to develop the economy and to improve the livelihood of the people of Hong Kong. In the next three years, while it is difficult, as I said the difficulty lies now perhaps not in the matter of ability and competence but in the trust amongst the people of Hong Kong, myself and my team will try our very best to rebuild their trust so that we can continue to implement these social and economic policies. As I said, my commitment is to doing all this important work in the next three years.

Reporter: Thank you, Mrs Lam. You describe the protesters as being those who love Hong Kong, people who are part of families, they normally remain silent, but we know that they've made their demands very clear. They say they'd like you to resign and they want the extradition bill to be withdrawn completely. You say that you've listened to them very, very carefully, but can you tell them why today you are apparently ignoring their wishes because you are not resigning and this bill is not being withdrawn. Why?

Chief Executive: I have been listening very carefully and attentively to the views expressed over this period, especially during the last two Sundays when a lot of people went out to the streets. I have responded to both. One was on June 15, I have announced that we will suspend the legislative exercise, and

immediately that afternoon we put a stop to the legislative exercise by informing the Legislative Council that the bill will no longer proceed to second reading debate. I'm standing here to make a further commitment in recognition of the anxieties and the fears that have been caused by this bill in the last few months. I said, and I undertook, that if we do not have that level of confidence to address those anxieties and fears and differences in opinion, we will not proceed with the legislative exercise again. As some legislative members have pointed out, every legislative council has a term. The current term of the Legislative Council will expire in July next year. If, under a situation when we have no timetable, we will make sure that we could address those concerns and anxieties before we move forward, it is very unlikely that the bill will be able to make the deadline of the end of this term. Should that happen, the Government will accept the reality.

As far as the other demand, I've said that I want another chance to deliver the many initiatives that will help Hong Kong's economy and improve the livelihood of the Hong Kong people. I myself and my political team will continue to work very hard to achieve those objectives and to meet the aspirations of the Hong Kong people.

Reporter: Mrs Lam, in your speech you said you want to mend the rift in society. You said you want people to trust the Government again. The legal definition of "riot" is that for people taking part in an unlawful assembly and that there is a breach of peace that would be a riot. I know the CP what he said. I know what you said you agreed with him. Trying to re-instil the trust in people, can you just say once and for all that everybody who took part in the June 12 protest would not be charged for rioting because that's the demand for people who took part in the rally on Sunday? The mending the rift part, would you take some advice from some people, let's say Anson Chan, who want you to set up a commission of inquiry to look into alleged police brutality, so as to ease people's concerns about how the Police could kind of hide behind the scene? Because none of the officers actually had a number while they were allegedly attacking the protesters. Can you set up that inquiry so that there can be an investigation? Thank you.

Chief Executive: Let me first answer the second question. Hong Kong has very well established mechanisms to deal with complaints against the Police. We have the CAPO, the Complaints Against Police Office, and we have an Independent Police Complaints Council, the IPCC. We should make the full use of these institutions to address any complaints that people, including the protesters, have against the actions of the Police during those events. And if I remember correctly, the Commissioner of Police has told us that there were a number of such complaints being lodged already.

The second question actually is about lawfulness. Anybody who has committed an offence has to be brought to justice. I believe this is a common aspiration of Hong Kong people and also one of the core values of a place which is so proud of the rule of law. On June 12, if some participants, some protesters, have resorted to violence and there is sufficient evidence to prove that they have used violence, then of course the Police needs to take action. The action includes investigation, collecting evidence and then

consulting the Department of Justice on the prosecution.

Maybe the term "riot" has given rise to a lot of concern, so the Commissioner of Police has come out last evening to explain that the term "riot" was used to refer to certain people's behaviour during that day over a particular period. For other participants, peaceful participants and peaceful protesters, on the same day, on June 12, in the same place, that is around Queensway, but they have not used violence, then the Commissioner of Police's assurance is of course they will not be prosecuted for an act of riot because they have not participated or taken part in such acts of riot. And he went on to provide an assurance to the majority of the people who were peaceful, peaceful protestors, during June 12.

Reporter: Sorry, that's not the legal definition...

Chief Executive: The legal definition has to be addressed by the legal people.

Reporter: Your inability to say the word "retract", to me at least, will continue to sow distrust in Hong Kong society, but you say that you want another chance here. Critics –not myself – but critics have said that you are a habitual liar, and that you need to cry today to be believed. To any person, that would be devastating to hear. How do you feel about that?

Chief Executive: I do not accept that sort of description. Throughout my public service career, integrity and character are very important virtues – of myself and indeed for any public officer. I have explained in response to several questions on how we have dealt with this bill that has caused a lot of anxiety and worries in society. We have immediately stopped the bill on June 15, and I have furthermore undertaken that, because this bill over the last few months has caused so much anxieties, worries and differences in opinion, I will not- this is an undertaking- proceed again with this legislative exercise if these fears and anxieties could not be adequately addressed. For those who know the legislative rules of procedures, the current Legislative Council term will come to an end in July next year, and if the bill – because we have no timetable, we need more time to address those anxieties –did not make Legislative Council by July next year, it will expire, it will no longer have a validity and the Government will accept that reality. I think I have made this position clear and loud.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)