

Transcript of remarks by CE at media session before ExCo meeting (with video)

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, at a media session before the Executive Council meeting this morning (September 10):

Reporter: Over the Hong Kong Democracy and Human Rights Act, actually the US also has the Hong Kong Policy Act that has been in place since the 90s, is that not foreign interference? Is that the Government's position is that if a bill can bring benefits to Hong Kong it should be passed but if it puts restrictions on certain figures in Hong Kong that it shouldn't be passed by a foreign congress? Second question being that your advisor, Fanny Law, alleged that a 14 year old had sex with protestor and she provided a WhatsApp message as proof. Will you apologise for this kind of behaviour? Is this the level of competency you expect from your closest advisors? Thank you.

Chief Executive: First of all, under the Basic Law, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region does enjoy a high degree of autonomy in conducting our external affairs. Those external affairs certainly will be of mutual benefits to both parties. When we sign a free trade agreement, when we have comprehensive avoidance of double taxation, those were done in that proper context to bring mutual benefits to both parties. Similarly, any agreements that we have or any particular provisions apply to Hong Kong from the Americans, they are not exclusively for the benefit of Hong Kong; they are also mutual. Just to give you an example, there are close to 1,400 US companies in Hong Kong. They will of course enjoy the benefits arising from any bilateral relationship – a positive bilateral relationship between Hong Kong and the United States. That's a very important point. But to interfere into Hong Kong's internal affairs in terms of what we are doing under the Basic Law, protection of freedoms and liberties, this is totally unnecessary because we ourselves have the obligation and the duty to comply with provisions in the Basic Law.

As far as comments by one of my Executive Council members, I would say that those comments are representing her own personal views. But I would like to take this in a broader context. I mentioned in my opening remarks that in the last couple of months or so, there were a lot of fake news or rumours or speculations circulating on the social media. I would advise that if any of these rumours, allegations, speculations concern breaches of the law or in other words, if somebody suspects that offences have been made, then they should report them to the police, or at least they should consult the professionals or their own family members. For others who have read such reports or rumours, if they want to provide a sort of advisory note, then I hope that is also to be understood. At the end of the day, the most important thing as I said in my introductory remarks is that every one of us, including

Government officials, because we are also receiving a lot of information circulating in the social media, we have to be extremely cautious in ascertaining whether it is accurate. As far as the Government is concerned, if those rumours and speculations concern any Government operations or decisions or activities, then we have a duty to come out to provide a clarification. If you go to the Information Services Department website, we have created a special section to provide those sorts of timely clarifications in order to stop those unfounded rumours and speculations being widely circulated on the social media.

Reporter: The withdrawal of the extradition bill has failed to quell the protest as well as the unrest. So what do you plan to do politically to bring back relative peace to Hong Kong? And also, what's in the way of setting up a CoI or independent inquiry?

Chief Executive: Thank you. If you read my video statement, the offer of four actions, not just the formal withdrawal of the bill, is not directly to stop these protests or the violence. It is really to extend my sincerity to start a dialogue with the people. In our view, violence should be stopped for the benefit of Hong Kong. Going forward, to mend the rift in society and to bring back peace, we are very willing to engage people directly in a dialogue. That is our current position and as I've said in my introductory remarks, we are gearing up to go into the community to have that dialogue directly with the people, but I made the further appeal here that the first priority in order to achieve the objective of bringing peace and order to Hong Kong is for all of us, all people of Hong Kong, to say no to violence.

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