

Transcript of remarks by CE at press conference (2)

Reporter: Thank you very much, Chief Executive, Carrie Lam. The world is watching. This move can be perceived as a step closer to authoritarianism, like in Mainland China. Your reaction?

Chief Executive: I notice that the world is watching and I hope that the world will watch the situation in a comprehensive and impartial manner. That's point number one. Point number two is perception is perhaps not the reality. Again, I appeal to the outside world who have an interest in Hong Kong that they should not be influenced just by perception. They should try to understand the situation. In this case the HKSAR Government is invoking a valid existing piece of legislation to make a regulation, and the regulation made fully complies with the spirit and the letter in this piece of existing and valid legislation. So, I don't see how you could relate this to a step closer to authoritarianism. This is a responsible act to deal with an extremely difficult situation, which I hope the world has sympathy.

Reporter: You were in Beijing, not Hong Kong, for October 1 holidays. Did you get Beijing's approval to do this?

Chief Executive: As in all other things relating to this exercise, I have said time and again, that this is something that we will handle within Hong Kong in accordance with "One country, Two systems" and our existing legal and non-legal means. There is no such thing as the Central People's Government's approval for the Chief Executive in Council to exercise a power which is given to the Chief Executive in Council under existing legislation. I may just add that my very brief trip to Beijing is to lead a delegation to celebrate the National Day and I came back much earlier than the other delegation members. I was in Hong Kong on October 1 by around late afternoon. There is absolutely no interaction, discussion, encounters whatsoever with any Central People's Government officials on this matter during my very brief stay in Beijing.

Reporter: The Malaysian PM actually asked you, Mrs Lam, to step down. He said that is, well, you have to check your conscience and then he suggested you to step down. This is perhaps the first time an international leader has made such a suggestion. How would you respond to that? Also, you said that the Government does not plan to use the ERO to do anything against the Basic Law. Are you going to then impose media censorship? Is that against the Basic Law? Can you make that clear? Also, given that the tension between the Police and people, is it a correct decision to give the Police more power and another reason to stop a citizen on the street, and would that not worsen the ties between the public and the Police? Thank you.

Chief Executive: First of all, I have not read the report or the statement made by an overseas leader, but every one of us has a freedom of expression,

so I'm not going to comment on whatever was being said.

Second point is about using the Emergency Regulations Ordinance to make regulations. I have time and again repeated that we have to fulfil the objective in the Emergency Regulations Ordinance, that is either there is emergency situation or a public safety issue, before we could invoke the Ordinance. Even in invoking the Ordinance, we cannot act contrary to other prohibitions, especially those which are of a constitutional nature, so certainly a very careful thought has to be given to contemplating other regulations to be made by the ERO. I could not be more specific at this point in time because if we were to do some internal deliberations, those will be related to the ...

Reporter: ... What about media censorship?

Chief Executive: Freedoms, as the Secretary for Justice has mentioned, are not without limits. There are things which one has to strike a balance in dealing with a particular situation. And we have case law, we have international conventions pointing out to those considerations.

Tension between Police and people, one has to appreciate, as what the Secretary for Security has said, Police are in a reactionary mode. They are people enforcing the law. If there are no people breaching the law, Police will have very little to react to. If the Police have to take actions because people are violating the law, we have to make sure that the Police have adequate powers, adequate resources, to be able to discharge their duties. Any suggestion that because we don't want people to dislike the Police and hence we better don't give the Police the adequate powers and resources to discharge their duties is perhaps not a very appropriate action to take.

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