

SBCR L/M 20/2000

Clerk to Security Panel
Legislative Council Building
8 Jackson Road
Central
Hong Kong
(Attn: Mrs Sharon Tong)

28 October 2000

Dear Sharon,

Security Panel Meeting on 24 October

The Security Panel discussed the Yu Man-hon incident at the meeting held on 24 October. Members also discussed a letter from Mrs. Yu to LegCo (not copied to the Administration) which set out her requests in relation to the search operation. During the discussion, Members asked for the Administration's written response on the following issues –

- (a) Whether we can request the relevant Mainland authorities to take the opportunity of the coming census to be conducted in early November to make enquiries on or to search for Man-hon;
- (b) Whether the Government can provide financial assistance to Man-hon's parents to place notices in the Mainland printed media to appeal for reports on any signs of Man-hon;
- (c) Whether the Administration can give necessary assistance to organizations which are undertaking search operations in the Mainland on a voluntary basis; and
- (d) The Administration should meet Mr. and Mrs. Yu to discuss how

best to search for their son.

Our response to Members' questions is set out below –

- (a) We have already conveyed the request through the Beijing Office to the Mainland authorities for consideration.
- (b) We understand that Man-hon's parents would like to appeal to residents in the Mainland to look out for any signs of their son. Coverage in the electronic media is an effective means to disseminate the news. In fact, the Mainland electronic media has already given wide coverage on the news of Man-hon. We have secured the agreement of the China National Radio to broadcast another round of appeal in its South China channels. ATV is broadcasting an appeal to the public to look out for the signs of Man-hon. Viewers of ATV in both Hong Kong and in the Mainland should be aware of the news. We have also asked paging companies in Hong Kong/Mainland to continue to carry the appeal messages.

As regards Mrs. Yu's request for Government's financial assistance in placing notices in the Mainland's printed media, there is no precedent or established practice for this. Nevertheless in the light of the views and support given by Members of the Security Panel, we are prepared to give positive consideration in this special case to placing notices in the Mainland media appealing for reports on the whereabouts of Man-hon. We are sorting out detailed arrangements and expect to be able to give Mrs. Yu a positive and definitive reply next week.

- (c) Subsequent to the Panel meeting, we had a meeting with Mrs. Yu. She requested Government to give assistance and to issue reference letters to voluntary organizations to conduct search operation and investigation in the Mainland. We truly appreciate the efforts made by voluntary organizations in searching for Man-hon. As long as these organizations abide by the laws in the Mainland, we believe they are free to continue to search for Man-hon. Under the

principle of One Country Two Systems, we have no purview over the activities of individual organizations in the Mainland. Neither do we have the authority to issue reference letter to any organization for the purpose of carrying out investigations in the Mainland.

- (d) The Security Bureau and the Immigration Department have kept in close touch with Man-hon's parents to brief them on the latest development and to see if they require any other assistance. The Chief Executive and Acting Secretary for Security met Mrs. Yu and Mr. Yu respectively in September, whilst members of the Immigration Department special task force make regular visits to the family, both in Hong Kong and in Shenzhen. They maintain daily telephone contact with Mr. and Mrs. Yu, which facilitate immediate follow-up actions to be taken in response to any news on Man-hon's whereabouts. Deputy Secretary for Security, Mr. Timothy Tong and Deputy Director of Immigration, Mr. P T Choy, and a representative of the Social Welfare Department met Mrs. Yu again on 27 October.

Yours sincerely,

(Timothy Tong)
for Secretary for Security