

**For information
on 2 November 2000**

**Legislative Council
Panel on Security**

**Management Improvement Measures for
Hei Ling Chau Addiction Treatment Centre**

Purpose

This paper seeks to give members a brief account of the Correctional Services Department (CSD)'s findings pertaining to the disturbance involving some 400 inmates at the Hei Ling Chau Addiction Treatment Centre (HLTC) on 4 June 2000, and the management improvement measures taken by the Administration to enhance management and security at HLTC.

Background

2. Situated on Hei Ling Chau Island, HLTC caters for the treatment of drug addicts sentenced to receive drug rehabilitation treatment from a minimum of two to a maximum of 12 months. Formerly a leprosarium founded in an open environment, the buildings and dormitories are scattered over a relatively large area of undulating landscape with no perimeter fence as with a prison. The major facilities are also designed on a therapeutic community concept making it very suitable for a wide spectrum of addiction treatment programmes including outdoor physical activities. There are two other correctional institutions on the island.

The Incident

3. A trivial dispute broke out between inmates at HLTC in the evening of 4 June 2000. Some inmates also transferred their feelings of discontent towards the institution management and staff. At the peak of the disturbances, there were some 400 inmates in dispersed locations in the institution. The mob ransacked the institution, set fire on premises and attacked the dormitory where the Vietnamese inmates were accommodated. When the final round of negotiations with the rioters held around midnight

broke down, a decision was made to take immediate action to minimize further casualties and to save the inmates held within a dormitory. Joint action was effected by the CSD Emergency Support Group and the Police Tactical Unit and order on the island was restored completely shortly after 1 a.m., 5 June 2000. All inmates were accounted for and fires were put out before daybreak.

4. During the incident, 32 disciplined staff (24 CSD and eight Police) and 33 inmates sustained injuries, with an estimated damage of HK\$12 million caused. A total of 119 allegations were subsequently raised by 37 inmates against the management of HLTC, although only 39 were relevant to the disturbance on 4 June 2000.

Board of Enquiry

5. After the disturbance on 4 June 2000, the Commissioner of Correctional Services (C of CS) ordered on the next day a full investigation by a Board of Enquiry (the Board). General terms of reference of the Board include:-

- (a) to identify circumstances and cause(s) of the incident;
- (b) to examine whether the incident had been handled properly;
- (c) to identify if there was negligence on the part of the staff and/or any inadequacy on the part of the management;
- (d) to make recommendations deemed appropriate for the improvement of management and security of HLTC as a whole and to avoid recurrence.

The Board completed its enquiry and the investigation report was accepted by C of CS and forwarded to the Secretary for the Security in August 2000.

The Board's Findings

6. The Board has concluded its enquiry with the following major findings:-

- (a) The disturbance was not premeditated. It was a spontaneous outbreak of collective mob behaviour which escalated quickly within a short period of time. It was triggered off by a minor

dispute between some local and the Vietnamese inmates.

- (b) CSD's guidelines regarding the response to emergency situations, the overall response from neighbouring institutions on the island and external reinforcement personnel were in order. This enabled the swift restoration of order with the use of minimal force. As a result, there were no serious casualties along the disciplined services staff and the inmates.
- (c) There is room for improvement for identified management issues of HLTC, including the possession of unauthorized articles by some inmates and lax supervision by some HLTC staff. Management malpractices were identified and rectified.
- (d) 39 allegations pertaining to the disturbance were also investigated by the Board and the results will be conveyed to individual complainants in due course.

Recommendation

7. The Board has made over 20 recommendations covering the following main areas:-

- (a) the identified rioters be removed from association until their behaviour show genuine improvements conducive to their corrective rehabilitation;
- (b) management of HLTC be alerted to identified malpractices and required to make immediate efforts to tighten up the supervision of inmates;
- (c) post-trauma debriefing sessions be conducted for staff as appropriate;
- (d) eight CSD/Police/Fire Services Department personnel be commended;
- (e) disciplinary proceedings be considered against seven CSD officers whose conduct was called into question;
- (f) security of HLTC be enhanced in view of its open environment by

erecting partition fences at vantage points to tighten up supervision;

- (g) joint exercises with other departments be conducted to improve inter-departmental co-ordination and communication, a mobile communication system external to the local institution's Control Room be introduced to enhance communication in emergency situation, sea transport especially during emergencies be outsourced to improve the response time in the mobilization of the CSD Emergency Support Group, and the operational manual on handling of major incidents be further reviewed and refined as appropriate.

Follow-up Actions

8. C of CS has appointed a Special Task Group headed by the Deputy Commissioner to implement the Board's recommendations and monitor progress. To date :-

- (a) Management practices in HLTC have been revised and the supervision of inmates tightened up.
- (b) Action is being taken to erect internal partition fence at vantage points in HLTC to enhance control of movement of inmates.
- (c) Action has started to relocate the Liquefied Petroleum Gas Store in HLTC away from the centre of the institution.
- (d) The Emergency Organization Handbook is being reviewed and large scale joint exercises with the Police and the Fire Services Department have been organized in various regions to improve inter-departmental co-ordination as well as to familiarize senior officers with the handling of emergency situations.
- (e) A Task Group has been set up to review the security of all the Control Rooms across the Department, and to procure a mobile communication system to enhance effective communication.
- (f) Plans are in hand to outsource ferry services to improve response time by the CSD Emergency Support Group in dealing with emergency situations at remote institutions.

- (g) Reviews are being conducted on the design of rehabilitation programmes to take into consideration the propensity of younger inmates to collective outbursts of emotion.
- (h) Consideration for commendation / disciplinary proceedings on identified officers is being taken forward.
- (i) Investigations on all the 119 complaints are being finalised and relevant parties will be advised on the findings accordingly.

9. Independent criminal investigation into the incident was carried out separately by the Police who have referred their findings to the Department of Justice for advice on possible criminal proceedings against persons identified.

10. In view of the anticipated criminal proceedings and disciplinary hearings, and on legal advice, the main findings and recommendations of the Board of Inquiry's investigation can only be released in general terms as in the information paper.

Correctional Services Department
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