

**Special Meeting of LegCo Panel on Security
22 May 2001**

**Police Handling of Protests held in conjunction with
the Fortune Global Forum**

Background

The Fortune Global Forum (FGF) was held in Hong Kong between 8th and 10th May 2001 and was opened by President Jiang Zemin. Keynote speakers included Prime Minister Dr Thaksin Shinawatra of Thailand and the former President of the United States, Mr William Jefferson Clinton.

2. More than 600 participants, with over 40 of them from Fortune Global 500 Companies took part in this event. A strong representation from the Mainland including Vice Premier Qian Qichen, ministers, provincial governors, mayors, senior officials and entrepreneurs also attended the Forum. Other participants included chief executive officers from major global enterprises, policy makers and scholars.

Police Objectives

3. In planning security arrangements for the Forum, the Police's objectives were to ensure the security and smooth running of the Forum, to protect personal safety of national leaders and internationally protected persons, to minimise any inconvenience to the public and to facilitate peaceful and lawful public order events.

Security Arrangements

4. The Forum was assessed to be a high-risk event. This was based on intelligence, threat assessment of individual dignitaries and the recent violent incidents instigated by anti-globalisation movements during events of similar nature in other countries. Police must provide a level of security that is commensurate with the perceived threat unobtrusively and flexibly.

5. Security arrangements were similar to previous international events of comparable nature and scope. However, the particular level of risk on this occasion, compounded by the fact that two major events (and numerous other smaller ones) were being conducted at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre (HKCEC) at the same time, necessitated the extension of the security zone to cover the whole of the Phase II complex and its surrounding roads. These arrangements were in line with international practice and essential to protecting the safety of those attending the Forum.

6. 3000 police officers were deployed. Half of them performed crowd management duties at various locations in both Hong Kong Island and Kowloon during the firework display on 8th May 2001. The majority of the officers carried out personal protection, traffic escort, security, screening and search duties. The number of officers performing public order duties in the vicinity of the Forum and other locations was about 300 at any one time.

Handling of Demonstrations

7. Police policy is to facilitate, as far as possible, all peaceful public meetings and processions. In doing so, the Police seek to strike a balance between the rights of individuals to express their views freely and the need to ensure that no danger or undue inconvenience is caused to others.

8. Police took the initiative to engage potential protestors in constructive dialogue two weeks before the start of the Forum. Arrangements were put in place for them to stage lawful and peaceful demonstrations. During the Forum period, Police Community Relation Officers were deployed to talk to protestors who turned up at various locations without notifying Police in order to facilitate their demonstration.

9. Two Designated Public Activity Areas (DPAAs) near the HKCEC were established for demonstration purposes. The first DPAA was located directly opposite the HKCEC with a full view of its entrance.

That area was divided into nine sections to accommodate various groups in staging their demonstrations without impinging on each other's activities. Due to the size of the DPAA and the need to avoid conflict between different groups, appeal was made to them to keep the size of their representatives to twenty people as far as possible. No attempt whatsoever was made to limit the size of any group. The second DPAA was located at the open ground next to the Immigration Tower to facilitate activities of large groups.

10. These DPAA's were the closest possible locations to the event venue having regard to the security requirements, the expected number of protestors and the inconvenience that might be caused to other members of the public. Protestors have accepted these locations on previous occasions. Police also facilitated demonstrations in other locations throughout the territory.

Road Closure and Traffic Diversion

11. To ensure the integrity of the security operation, temporary road closures and traffic diversion were necessary. Duration of such closures was kept to the minimum to avoid causing inconvenience to the public. Occupants of buildings, offices and schools affected by these arrangements were informed well in advance and assistance offered by the Police where necessary. Frequent traffic bulletins were issued over the radio to keep motorists informed of the traffic situation.

12. Traffic officers used rolling cordons to facilitate free passage between venues by some dignitaries to ensure their personal safety. The duration of such road closure normally lasted only for about 10 minutes. On a few occasions the closure lasted for about 25 minutes due to particular circumstances.

Public Meetings and Processions

13. Police were unobtrusive and flexible during the whole operation. Police facilitated a total of 56 public gatherings and processions involving some 4 800 participants between 7th and 10th May 2001. Under the arrangements agreed between Police and the participants, most of these

events took place peacefully and orderly.

14. Unfortunately, certain groups chose not to co-operate with the Police and deliberately refused to follow well-intended advice and lawful instructions. Seven persons were arrested for Obstructing Police Officers in Execution of Duties on 7 May 2001 when they resisted the Police in removing them from the flagpole to which they chained themselves. The flagpole was within the precinct of the HKCEC II. Its management sought Police assistance. Police used the minimum force necessary to remove them. No one was injured.

15. On 8th May 2001, two traffic police officers on motorcycle patrol stopped a van in connection with a traffic offence near Fleming Road junction with Lockhart Road. Three persons were arrested in the course of which two police officers were injured. One of the officers suffered a fractured tooth that required surgical removal. Police again used the minimum force necessary to achieve their objectives. The arrested persons were released on bail. The investigation is still underway.

16. On the same day in another incident involving protestors outside Southorn Centre, Wanchai, a woman was arrested for Disorderly Conduct in Public Place. A home made coffin was seized by police officers at scene. The woman was released on bail and an investigation into her conduct is underway. Throughout both incidents, the Police exercised utmost restraint and in the second incident, continuously tried to talk to the protestors in an attempt to calm down the situation.

Incident in Ruttonjee Hospital

17. On 9th May 2001, those involved in the incident set out in paragraph 15 above conducted an interview with a live radio programme using a mobile telephone. This took place when the persons were still in Police custody and the Police had yet to interview them. The officer guarding them took the mobile telephone to stop the interview from continuing. An investigation is now underway.

18. Under the law, Police have a duty to promptly process a person held in custody for him to appear before a magistrate as soon as possible. Any activities unrelated to the investigation of the case and which

unnecessarily prolong the detention of the person concerned should not be allowed. Moreover, the rights of communication between a detainee and his legal representative do not extend to the media.

Conclusion

19. The main police objectives were to ensure the smooth running of the Forum and the safety of its participants, and to minimise any inconvenience to the public. These objectives were achieved fully. The Forum organizers were highly appreciative of the Police's efforts and many letters of appreciation had also been received from the members of the public.

20. Every step had been taken to inform the public about the temporary inconveniences that might be caused and Police appealed repeatedly for their co-operation and understanding. Whilst Police had tried their best to keep any inconvenience to the minimum, apologies were made to those people who were affected. It is worth noting that few complaints have been received.

21. Two similar international events will be held in Hong Kong towards the end of the year. Overseas protestors are already appealing for support to come to Hong Kong via the Internet. Police will carefully assess the development and plan for all eventualities.

22. Finally, Police hope that Honorable Members of this Panel would appreciate that international events of this nature carry with them considerable risks and opportunities. Police must deal with these challenges resolutely and seriously.

Hong Kong Police Force
May 2001