

Extract from the minutes of Security Panel meeting on 7 December 2000

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IV. Prison development programme

(LC Paper No. CB(2) 388/00-01(03))

25. Members noted the Administration's presentation on the prison development programme, particularly the concept of co-location of prison institutions in a large prison complex. Deputy Secretary for Security 2 (DS for S2) briefed Members on the Administration's paper and said that the new prison complex might comprise four clusters of different penal institutions, such as reception centres, drug addiction treatment centres and prisons. Each cluster would have its own perimeter wall. The penal institutions within a cluster would be completely separated from each other. They would continue to be operated separately under the respective legislation concerned. The Correctional Services Department would continue to allocate different types of inmates to penal institutions of different levels of security. She assured Members that due consideration would be given to the security of the new prison complex. Assistant Commissioner of Correctional Services added that an existing example of co-location of penal institutions could be found in Stanley, where the Stanley Prison, Tung Tau Correctional Institution and Pak Sha Wan Correctional Institution had been operating in the vicinity of each other without problems for many years. The proposed prison complex was only a further development in this direction.

26. Mr Albert HO pointed out that the development of penal institutions should facilitate the provision of the best opportunity for inmates to rehabilitate and receive correctional services. He considered it inappropriate to develop a large prison complex, which would facilitate better management and deployment of resources rather than the rehabilitation of inmates. DS for S2 stressed that a large, new prison complex would also bring about improvements in rehabilitation service, as modern facilities in the complex would make it more effective and efficient to run rehabilitation programmes.

27. In response to Mr Andrew WONG's question about whether large prison complexes were found in other places, DS for S2 said that the Changi Prison Complex in Singapore, which was scheduled for completion in 2008, would provide more penal places than the large prison complex proposed for Hong Kong. She added that large prison complexes could also be found in Shenzhen on the Mainland, New South Wales of Australia and near New York in US.

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28. Mrs Selina CHOW said that the co-location of penal institutions, which should bring about better security, might not be undesirable. The key question was whether a sufficiently large site for constructing a large prison complex could be identified. DS for S2 said that the Administration should be able to identify such a site.

29. Mr James TO expressed grave reservations about the development of a large prison complex. He said that the maintenance cost for such a complex would be very high. He considered it more appropriate for some small penal institutions to be grouped together to form medium-sized penal complexes.

30. The Chairman expressed reservations about the development of a large prison complex. He said that a large prison complex might create management difficulties. In the event of a riot, the situation might quickly become uncontrollable, thus resulting in a disaster. He considered that medium-sized penal complexes were preferred to a large prison complex, and some of the existing penal institutions with more modern facilities could be retained. He suggested that the Administration should reconsider the issue and come up with other alternatives for further consultation.

31. DS for S2 said that if Members were not adverse to the concept of co-location of penal institutions, the idea would be further pursued with the identification of suitable site(s). She assured Members that they would be further consulted.

Adm

32. The Chairman requested the Administration to provide a written response to the question of riot as referred to in paragraph 30 above.

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