

THE HONG KONG AUSTRIAN ASSOCIATION LIMITED

Mrs. Regina S Y Lau Ip, JP
Secretary for Security
SAR Hong Kong Government

29 April, 2002

Dear Mrs. Ip,

Please allow me to comment briefly on some circumstances regarding the general law and order situation in Hong Kong.

Concerning the incident of your car being blocked by a demonstrating mob last week, one can only complement the Hong Kong Police Force for showing substantial restraint in dealing with the offenders. I venture to say that in any other civilized country, be it in Europe or the United States, police would have acted much more severely to deal with the demonstrators, especially if the car of a high ranking government official is surrounded and basically held hostage.

While we all go through great length to explain to the outside world that the law and order situation in Hong Kong is well established, I believe there is a major misconception among the general public, the media and - regretfully among at least some members of the Legislative Council.

We are not only concerned about upholding the corporate law, but very much so also the civil law, being subsequently substantially more important.

During the perhaps sensitive years immediately following the Handover, it was understood that the Government was taking a more lenient approach towards offenders.

Five years later however, we would expect the Government to uphold and implement the existing laws with no regard to how difficult or politically unpopular this might be.

Having had well over 6000 demonstrations since 1997, it does not make us a popular city in the global community, even more so as some of these demonstrations are breaking the law and the conditions under which they were originally approved.

It does not positively contribute to the local and international perception of Hong Kong to have unavoidable wide media coverage of continuous demonstrations. While for Hong Kong residents the total lack of credibility of many of these demonstrations must by now be obvious, given the perpetual appearance of the same faces of what seem to be "professional demonstrators", this distinction is not made by overseas viewers.

In a civilized society, the community has to understand and accept that once you break the law, the consequences will be enforced, regardless if it concerns one or one thousand individuals.

Verbally or physically attacking the enforcing members of the disciplined services clearly is an offence and should be dealt with accordingly. Otherwise we will face in the near future a deterioration of morale in these services.

We express our hope and confidence that the Administration has also the political will and the Legislative Council the courage to support the implementation and enforcement of the existing laws in Hong Kong.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Best regards

Erwin A. Hardy

Chairman

Cc: Mrs. Elsie O S Leung, JP, Secretary for Justice

Mrs. Rita Fan, GBS, JP, President, Legislative Council

Mr. Tsang Yam Pui, Commissioner, Hong Kong Police Force