

香港警察
處長辦公室

HONG KONG POLICE
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

Ref: CP 212/14

2 May 2002

Tel: 2860 2001

Mr Erwin A Hardy
Chairman
The Hong Kong Austrian Association Limited
GPO Box 8031
Central
Hong Kong

Dear Mr Hardy,

On receiving copy of your 29 April 2002 letter to the Secretary for Security I was very pleased to note your words of support for the Hong Kong Police Force.

You will appreciate, I am sure, the difficulties involved in policing public order situations in any jurisdiction where freedom of expression is observed. This is particularly so when the rights of those directly involved must be carefully balanced against the interests and safety of the public at large.

Again you will undoubtedly appreciate that the incident outside the LegCo building on 24 April 2002 could have quickly escalated into serious disorder if not appropriately handled. The Hong Kong Police's experience of policing such events has shaped our approach in such circumstances. This ultimately sees our officers seeking to diffuse situations, and avoid heated confrontation wherever possible in the interests of preserving the public peace overall. When tensions have 'cooled' appropriate pre-planned follow up action can be initiated.

This approach, adopted by my officers on 24 April 2002, resulted in a generally peaceful resolution to the incident that day, notwithstanding eight of the demonstrators being subsequently arrested for the offences of 'Disorderly Conduct' and 'Assaulting Police Officers'. A similar strategy, designed to minimise the likelihood of disorder, was employed the following day during an operation to clear the same group of demonstrators from the adjacent Chater Garden. The strategy as described was, in my view, appropriate in the circumstances.

Once again thank you for your support of the Hong Kong Police Force.

Yours sincerely,

(TSANG Yam-pui)
Commissioner of Police

cc Mrs Regina Ip JP, Secretary for Security
The Honourable Elsie Leung JP, Secretary for Justice
The Honorary Mrs Rita Fan GBS JP, President of the Legislative Council