

For discussion on
24 May 2002

Legislative Council Panel on Security

18 May 2002

**Issue arising from Police and
Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) press releases
which raise public concern**

Objective

On 18 May 2002, ICAC issued a press release about the arrest of several Police officers on 16 May. In response, Police later released a statement. This document provides background information about this incident.

Background

2. Over the past year, ICAC has arrested several Police officers on corruption allegations, and has also issued press releases subsequently. These cases have been widely reported by the media. Until now, some of those arrested have been released unconditionally, while some others are still under investigations. However, ICAC has not provided the public with the progress of the investigations.

3. On the night of 16 May, ICAC arrested a Senior Superintendent (SSP), a Senior Inspector (SIP) and a Station Sergeant (SSGT) and other related persons.

4. On 17 May, though ICAC has not issued any press release, local media reported the case extensively, and alleged that the officers in question “leaked information” to vice syndicates. In response to media enquiries, the Force stated that police fully support ICAC anti-corruption action.

5. In the morning of 18 May, ICAC issued a press release which not only confirmed the arrest of three Police officers and another person, but also alleged that the SSP accepted advantages and provided tip-off on impending

Police operations against entertainment establishments. (Annex A) Police also issued a press release stating that no corruption activities would be tolerated. (Annex B)

6. On 19 May, police issued a further statement stating that ICAC should not issue statements carrying unconfirmed allegations. The disclosure of unconfirmed allegations tarnishes the reputation of the Force and raises serious concerns amongst members of the public as well as the Force. Therefore, ICAC should take steps to clarify these unconfirmed allegations. Furthermore, in the past year, there have been several similar cases involving the arrest of police officers and the release of unconfirmed allegations by the ICAC, which still owes members of the public and the Force a clear explanation. (Annex C)

7. In the same evening, ICAC issued a press statement saying that the Commission had provided updated information on the allegations to the Police.

8. On 20 May, the Commissioner of Police said he was satisfied with ICAC's response and told the media on the night of 21 May that Police and ICAC had arrived at a consensus over the incident and the working relationship between the two departments had all along been good, and the incident would not affect their co-operation. Senior officials of the Police and ICAC would hold a meeting to discuss measures to strengthen co-operation and communication.

Liaison mechanism between Police and ICAC

9. At present, Police and ICAC hold four regular liaison meetings, and the details are as follows:

- (a) Operations Review Committee Meeting is held every six weeks, attended by the Commissioner of Police, ICAC Commissioner and senior officers from its operations department.
- (b) Operational Liaison Group Meeting is held every six months, conducted by Police's Director of Crime and Security, ICAC's Head of Operations, and operational officers from both departments.

- (c) Police Corruption Prevention Group Meeting is held every six months, conducted by Police's Director of Management Services and ICAC's Director of Corruption Prevention Department.
- (d) Force Anti-Corruption Strategy Committee Meeting is held every four months, conducted by Police's Director of Management Services with officers from various units within the Force and attended by ICAC's Assistant Directors of both Operations and Corruption Prevention Departments.

10. Meanwhile, there is a notification system between the two departments on the arrest of Police officers over allegations of corruption. These liaison channels are working well.

Conclusion

11. The Police press release is neutral and clear, with an aim to respond to the ICAC press statement issued on 18 May. ICAC alleges that some Police officers are engaged in "providing tip-offs" to crime syndicates. This allegation is very serious and the release of this kind of unconfirmed information to the public will tarnish the reputation of Police Force. It was believed that there was a need to respond to the ICAC statement and it was not meant to be a public denunciation.

12. Police is satisfied with ICAC's willingness to provide further information on the progress of these investigations in the past year, and the Force will follow-up on these cases. This incident has come to an end and the co-operation between Police and ICAC has not been affected.

13. Police and ICAC will review the existing liaison channels and examine ways to strengthen our co-operation, and prevent similar incidents in the future.

Response statement dated 18.5.02

In response to numerous enquiries from the media in regard to an arrest operation of the Independent Commission Against Corruption, the Commission today (Saturday) confirmed that three police officers were arrested in an operation which commenced on Thursday.

They were a Senior Superintendent, a Senior Inspector and a Detective Station Sergeant of the Police.

An operator of various karaoke lounges and nightclubs, who is the wife of the Senior Inspector, was also arrested in the operation.

The Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) is alleged to have accepted advantages, including free prostitution services, from the operator.

In return, the SSP allegedly provided tip-offs on impending police operations against various entertainment establishments in Tsim Sha Tsui and Mong Kok, including nightclubs and karaoke lounges, through the Detective Station Sergeant.

The arrestees are being detained by the ICAC. Enquiries are continuing.

Police will not tolerate corruption activities

Commenting on the arrests of three Police officers by the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC), a Police spokesman said today (May 18) that Police will not tolerate any corruption activities and will fully support the ICAC investigation.

The spokesman noted that the total number of corruption reports involving Police officers has dropped 14.8 per cent from 602 cases in 2000 to 513 cases in 2001 as compared to 4 390 and 4 476 corruption reports received by the ICAC in 2000 and 2001 respectively.

A total of 107 cases involving Police officers have been reported in the first three months of this year as compared to an overall 1 047 reports received by the ICAC.

"The Force has taken the initiative in the fight against corruption and has developed a strategy to promote a corruption free working environment for members of the Force," the spokesman added.

Police Report No.1

Issued By PPRB

End/1345 hours, Saturday, May 18, 2002

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Police statement on ICAC allegation

Regarding the press response by the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) on the arrest of three Police officers including a Senior Superintendent, Police issued the following statement today (May 19):

ICAC stated that a senior Police officer is alleged to have accepted advantages to provide tip-offs on impending police operations against entertainment establishments in Tsim Sha Tsui and Mong Kok. This allegation is very serious and detrimental to the reputation of the Hong Kong Police Force.

There were several similar ICAC arrest operations and allegations made against police officers last year in which no result has been made known up to this moment. Officers in the Force are deeply concerned about the fact that despite serious allegations having been made, no corresponding criminal prosecutions have been instituted to date.

The Force fully supports ICAC in their fight against corruption and will continue to render whatever assistance required in respect of operations involving police officers. However, we believe that ICAC should be more circumspect in the release of information relating to specific allegations which have yet been clarified. With regard to the several cases which occurred last year, ICAC should provide the public and the Force with a clear update as soon as possible.

Police will liaise with the ICAC with a view to clarifying the specific allegations contained in the ICAC press response. Should there be sufficient substance in the allegations, Police will co-operate closely with the ICAC in working out any preventive measures.

Police Report No. 3

Issued by PPRB

End/1730 hours, Sunday, May 19, 2002

