

Transcript of SCA's briefing after CA panel meeting

Following is the transcript (English portion) of a stand-up briefing on constitutional development given by the Secretary for Constitutional Affairs, Mr Stephen Lam, after attending the meeting of the Legislative Council Panel on Constitutional Affairs this afternoon (February 16):

Reporter: Reports that the consultation exercise is essentially a sham There is going to be a "second stove"..... What is your reaction to that?

SCA: When we went to Beijing and met departments of the Central Authorities, the clear impression we had was that the colleagues of the Central Authorities were very serious about these discussions concerning constitutional development. They do want to enable Hong Kong to gain a proper understanding of the principles and legislative process backing up constitutional development in the Basic Law and we have had useful discussions in Beijing.

Reporter: But is it a sham? That's the question. Is it a show?

SCA: These discussions are clearly constructive discussions leading to a more comprehensive understanding of the Basic Law regarding the constitutional development process.

Reporter: But the conversation could be sincere and it could be productive but if there is already a bottomline somewhere and that's going to be imposed, then the discussion isn't a set of the show? So is it your impression that a show is a real possibility?

SCA: Our clear impression is that the departments of the Central Authorities are very serious about these discussions and they do want Hong Kong to gain a proper understanding of the Basic Law. We have never had any discussions about specific methods for electing the Chief Executive or for forming the Legislative Council beyond 2007. So at this stage, the discussions are purely about principles and legislative process.

Reporters: Did the question of patriotism arise at all in any way during your discussion in Beijing?

SCA: The Chief Secretary for Administration already made clear in the Legislative Council statement on Wednesday last week that the departments of the Central Authorities restated to us the principle and the policy adopted in the 1980s about "Hong Kong people ruling Hong Kong", and that is the Central Authorities would expect the main body of Hong Kong people responsible for running Hong Kong affairs following reunification would be those Hong Kong people who love the country and who love Hong Kong.

Reporter: Did anybody raise the question of patriotism specifically in connection with Article 23 as was talked to editors during a briefing?

SCA: The Chief Secretary for Administration has already made a detailed statement to the Legislative Council. I do not have any further details to add. But what I can say is that our clear view is that Hong Kong people do identify with the overall development of the country. They take a positive view of how well China is doing internationally. Hong Kong people and Hong Kong community as a whole welcome the reunification and support the implementation of "One Country, Two Systems" according to the Basic Law in Hong Kong.

Reporter: Is it the government's view that the people who organised and participated in the march against the Article 23 legislation were patriotic?

SCA: We do believe that the vast majority of Hong Kong people are patriotic. They do identify with the implementation of the Basic Law in Hong Kong and Hong Kong community as a whole does support that we need to protect national security. As the government, at this stage, we are not ready to resubmit draft legislation on Article 23. And as and when we do so, we will do our very best to explain to the community the need for the legislation, and we will only move ahead and with support of both the Legislative Council and community.

Reporter: Whether one is patriotic or not or whether he is supportive to Article 23 legislation or not shall be linked to the constitutional reform?

SCA: The HKSAR Government deals with the question of constitutional development and national security legislation separately.

(Please also refer to the [Chinese](#) portion of the transcript.)

Ends/Monday, February 16, 2004

NNNN