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31 March 2009

Clerk to Panel on Security
Legislative Council Secretariat
Legislative Council Building
8 Jackson Road
Central
(Attn: Mr Raymond Lam)

Dear Mr Lam,

**Security Panel
Follow-up to meeting on 3 February 2009**

At the meeting of the Security Panel on 3 February 2009, Members considered LC Paper No. CB(2)737/08-09(15) and requested the Administration to explain why the proposed integrated radio system for the Customs Drug Investigation Bureau (CDIB) in Customs and Excise Department could not be built on the existing dedicated communications systems operated by other law enforcement agencies, notably the one operated by the Crime Wing in the Hong Kong Police Force.

We have critically examined the feasibility of shared use of dedicated radio systems between Customs and other law enforcement agencies, including that operated by the Crime Wing, but concluded that this is not a

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viable solution. Generally speaking, such systems were each purpose-built to support the specific functions of the law enforcement agencies concerned. To share the use of these systems would involve considerable costs of system modification to also cater for the operational requirements of the CDIB. But in view of the relatively short remaining life span of the existing systems of the other law enforcement agencies, the shared use option is not particularly cost-effective compared with the proposal of developing a new radio system for the CDIB, especially if we take into account the latest technological features that we require to build into the CDIB's radio system.

For illustration, the radio system deployed by the Crime Wing of the Hong Kong Police Force is a dedicated system designed to meet the specific operational needs of the Crime Wing. For its unique security reasons, the Crime Wing system is not hitherto shared with other law enforcement agencies.

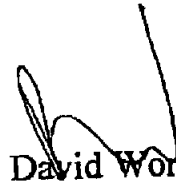
In use since 2003, the radio system in the Crime Wing will approach the end of its normal life span in about ten years from now. In comparison, the proposed CDIB radio system will remain operative from 2012 until 2027. Based on a rough estimate, a non-recurrent cost of HK\$40.3 million, or HK\$4.03 million per annum over the 10-year period, would be required if the CDIB were to build its radio system on the radio system of the Crime Wing on a shared use basis. There is also the uncertainty for the future effective operation of the proposed CDIB system when the Crime Wing system 'consumes' its life span. For comparison purposes, the non-recurrent cost of the proposed CDIB radio system is estimated at HK\$52 million, or HK\$3.46 million per annum over an expected life span of 15 years.

Taking into account the advanced features available, such as a high degree of responsiveness, which are essential to the operations of the CDIB, the proposed CDIB radio system is clearly the preferred option.

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In view of the above analysis, we reaffirm our intention to pursue the proposal in LC Paper No. CB(2)737/08-09(15) to meet the operational needs of the CDIB.

Yours sincerely,



(David Wong)
for Secretary for Security