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The Godfrey Saga

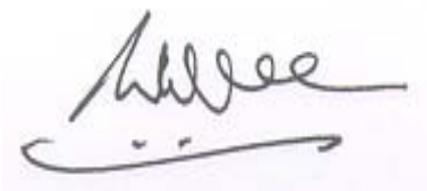
Please convey to the Panel my message below for consideration.

- This episode involves not only technical and political but also legal and ethical issues, thus requiring a techno-managerial decision as well as an administrative/political solution.
- The proposal of summoning Jeremy Godfrey (immediate past Government Chief Information Officer), John Tsang (Financial Secretary) and Elizabeth Tse (Permanent Secretary for Commerce & Economic Development – Communications & Technology), and perhaps others, is a first and necessary step and will, if eventuated, help to lay the *prima facie* evidence on the table.
- However, this (the proposed summoning of Godfrey, Tsang and Tse, and perhaps others) may make it possible to determine who is telling the truth – Godfrey or the government or it may not. In any case, Hong Kong's integrity will be ruined: If Jeremy Godfrey is proved right, then he will be a walking role model of Computer Ethics and Professionalism that the hundreds and thousands of IT professionals around the world are eager for, but at the same time, Hong Kong will be labeled a region of autocracy and its Financial Secretary and Permanent Secretary (Communications & Technology) are guilty of being autocratic. Otherwise, the Hong Kong Government runs a lamb duck administration, and the high officials are made up of incompetent bureaucrats. Hence, the proposal is nothing but an act of administrative or political enquiry.
- This state of affairs disturbs me. I am also disturbed because of comments on technical matters made by the officials and politicians who are apparently without the necessary and sufficient technical qualifications to do so.

- If handled well, Hong Kong will be hailed a city of high morality, which is something of an exception rather a norm nowadays, certainly to be admired by people around the world. Otherwise, the administrative power of the Hong Kong Government is undermined, and the reputation of Hong Kong as an international financial hub tarnished; Hong Kong will be reduced to a laughing stock in the global IT community, from which the acutely needed IT talent and international investors will keep away. Hence, I recommend to LegCo to proceed with the following steps:
 1. Go ahead with the proposed summon of Godfrey, Tsang, Tse and others as deemed necessary. This will provide at least a platform to both parties to testify. The data thus obtained may be used for future verification. However, this is still far away from the desirable solution that is not only legally but ethically sound.
 2. Re-assess all the proposals received on the basis of the tender specification. The results of re-assessment will throw light to verify the justification as to whom the contract should be awarded. This will also provide an objective cross-check of Godfrey's allegation and the Government's defence.
 3. Appoint independent qualified IT professionals to conduct the re-assessment, and select only those who are potentially free of conflict-of-interest and apparently without political affiliations.

I shall be pleased to respond to or clarify any queries you may have.

Wanbil W. Lee

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Wanbil W. Lee', with a long horizontal flourish underneath.