



HONG KONG ALLIANCE IN SUPPORT OF PATRIOTIC DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENTS OF CHINA

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## *Forget Not June 4<sup>th</sup>! Objection to Article 23!*

The Views of the Alliance on the National Security (Legislative Provisions) Bill

April 2003

The student's demand in 1989 for actions against corruption and official profiteering, triggered by the death of Mr. Hu Yaobang, the ex-general secretary of the Chinese Communist Party, later developed into an epic earth-shaking patriotic pro-democracy movement. Zhao Ziyang, who succeeded Hu Yaobang as the general secretary of the party, together with part of the leadership, once named this as a patriotic movement, and that the students were peaceful and patriotic. However on the 26<sup>th</sup> April in the same year, the People's Daily, which is the party's mouthpiece, in its editorial entitled 'Must oppose the commotion unequivocally!', branded the student movement as a disturbance, and that it was a well-planned conspiracy. This allegation seriously distorted the truth, vilifying and stifling the student movement. The leadership then promulgated martial law and eventually cracked down on the movement with violence and bloodshed.

After June 4<sup>th</sup>, the organisations of the students and those of the workers were branded as illegal organisations. Those who had taken part in the movement were charged for Counter-revolution, which was equivalent to the present offence of Conspiracy in Subversion. According to the information collected by the Alliance, over two thousand persons were arrested for taking part in the 1989 pro-democracy movement, and several hundred of them are still in prison now.

During the 1989 pro-democracy movement, our Alliance convened and led the people of Hong Kong in an unprecedented scale to support the pro-democracy movement. We sent people to the Tiananmen to console and to support the sit-in students and we also helped people fleeing the crackdown. After the June 4<sup>th</sup> crackdown, some of our volunteers were arrested by Beijing, our donated money of over one million dollars was confiscated, and is still being kept by the Communist Government. The bloody crackdown by the Chinese Government has claimed a lot of lives. Some others were imprisoned and have since lost their freedom. A lot of people have lost their dearest ones. It is now fourteen years and Hong Kong is still the only place in Chinese territories where people can openly ask for the release of pro-

democracy activists and the commemoration of those who died in the June 4<sup>th</sup> crackdown, and where people can help the bereaved on June 4<sup>th</sup> and can demand 'vindicate June 4<sup>th</sup>'.

A commentary in the People's Daily in that year branded our Alliance 'a subversive organisation'. During the drafting of the Basic Law, the original version of Article 23 was amended to pinpoint at our Alliance, so as to expand the scope for crackdowns, prohibitions, and criminal offence. However we have not been scared. On the contrary, we feel much honoured and proud. If this is branded 'subversive', we will definitely keep on being 'subversive'.

In the blue paper on legislation of Article 23 of the Basic Law, there are several provisions specially connected with our Alliance :-

1. Introducing into Hong Kong the national laws on undermining national security. An organisation in Hong Kong, if regarded as being subordinate to an illegal organisation in mainland China, will be banned.
2. In the so-called offence of subversion, new elements have been added such as 'national stability' and 'intimidating the Central Government' which will criminalize even the mere slogans of our Alliance.
3. New provisions have been added such as secret trial and hearing in absenteeism.
4. No time limit for prosecution.

It is estimated that following the passing of this draconian law, our Alliance will surely be the first target. However we will brave all adversities and will never flinch. In the present legislature where the majority are Government royalists, it is expected this draconian law will definitely be passed. However we shall certainly insist on opposing it while uniting with the people of Hong Kong to prepare for civil disobedience.

In commemorating the 14<sup>th</sup> anniversary of June 4<sup>th</sup>, the slogan of our Alliance for this year is 'Forget not June 4<sup>th</sup>! Objection to Article 23!'

What in fact is the relation between 'Forget not June 4<sup>th</sup>!' and 'Objection to Article 23'? We consider that : If we insist on supporting the patriotic pro-democracy movement in mainland China, and if we insist on our five main aims namely 'Release the Pro-democracy Activists, Reverse the verdict on the 1989 Pro-democracy Movement, Investigate on the liability for the Massacre, End the One Party Dictatorship and Construct a Democratic China', we must oppose the legislation on Article 23 of the Basic Law. This legislation is levelling at our Alliance, and will reduce the latitude of our activities and may even deprive us of our existence. This is like a sword above our heads. This is why we link 'Forget not June 4<sup>th</sup>' and 'Objection to Article 23' together. We will insist on the five principles of our Alliance. It is no crime in ending one-party dictatorship, and it is incumbent upon us to construct a democratic China.

We appeal to the people of Hong Kong to actively participate in the 'Patriotic Pro-democracy Grand March' on the 1<sup>st</sup> June, and in the 'June 4<sup>th</sup> Candle-light Vigil', to cry out

'Forget not June 4<sup>th</sup>! Objection to Article 23!', to demonstrate our determination and our force in striving for democracy and in opposing the draconian laws.