

HKSAR Government firmly rejects remarks by US Consul General

In response to media enquiries, a spokesman of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government today (July 6) firmly rejected recent public remarks made by the Consul General of the United States of America (US) to Hong Kong and Macau on the Law of the People's Republic of China on Safeguarding National Security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (the National Security Law) enacted by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPCSC).

The Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, joined by the Secretary for Security, Mr John Lee, met with the US Consul General to Hong Kong and Macau, Mr Hanscom Smith, today to register the HKSAR Government's grave concern over the matter.

The spokesman said, "National security is a matter within the purview of the Central Authorities. In a unitary or federal state, legislation on national security is invariably carried out by the central authorities rather than local governments.

"As the highest organ of state power in China, the National People's Congress has the constitutional power and the duty to enact national security legislation for the HKSAR. The national law enacted has taken into account Hong Kong's actual situation."

The spokesman pointed out that according to Article 1 of the Basic Law, the HKSAR is an inalienable part of the People's Republic of China (PRC). Article 12 of the Basic Law stipulates that the HKSAR shall be a local administrative region of the PRC, which shall enjoy a high degree of autonomy and come directly under the Central People's Government.

The spokesman stressed, "The implementation of the 'One Country, Two Systems' principle in the HKSAR is entirely an internal matter of the PRC. No other state or legislature has the right to intervene, directly or indirectly, in such internal affairs.

"The National Security Law seeks to prevent, suppress and impose punishment for four types of acts and activities that seriously endanger national security. It targets an extremely small minority of people without adversely affecting the basic rights and freedoms legitimately enjoyed by Hong Kong people. It is an important step towards improving the 'One Country, Two Systems' institutional system and represents an essential and timely decision for restoring stability in Hong Kong. The law will not affect the high degree of autonomy, judicial independence and the rule of law in Hong Kong.

"Social unrest, the failure of the rule of law and a lack of protection for corporate assets and personal safety are genuine factors that would

undermine investors' confidence.

"As a matter of fact, these were the factors that led to the fall of Hong Kong's international rankings in the past year. The US has its own national security legislation, but we have never heard that such legislation affected the economic development and business environment of the US.

"The National Security Law can promptly reverse the chaotic situation of the past year and restore stability in Hong Kong, thereby improving Hong Kong's business and investment environment. We strongly believe that only with national security safeguarded can Hong Kong enjoy long-term stability and security.

"The legislation will be conducive to Hong Kong continuously improving its strengths, attracting overseas talents and strengthening its status as an international financial centre as well as a shipping and trading hub, in addition to giving impetus to promoting the development of innovation and technology. Our much-valued institutional strengths and core competitiveness will also remain intact. They include the rule of law and judicial independence, open and flexible markets, a simple and low tax regime, an efficient public sector and a favourable business environment with a level playing field.