

SCED speaks on RTHK and Hong Kong Policy Act Report released by US State Department

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Edward Yau, on Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK) and the Hong Kong Policy Act Report released by the US State Department at a media session after attending a meeting of the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council today (May 29):

Reporter: Have you narrowed down the list of the members of the (RTHK) task force? Can you further address concerns that this would affect the editorial independence of RTHK? My second question is about the ongoing concerns raised by the international community on the national security law. Is it the Government's attitude to just shrug off all concerns and tell everyone that nothing will be affected in Hong Kong, instead of actually addressing and conveying those messages and their concerns to Beijing?

Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development: On your first question about RTHK, we have not yet come up with the list (the line-up). We will issue it in the fullness of time.

As regards the US policy towards Hong Kong, I think we have stated time and again that the special trading status that Hong Kong enjoys is part and parcel of the "one country, two systems", because this provision has been given to Hong Kong by the Basic Law, Articles 116 and 151. It is not a gift (given) unilaterally by any trading partner. In fact, it is also recognised multilaterally, throughout the world, through our multilateral trading relations as well as our membership under the World Trade Organization. We take exception to the US policy recently announced by their Secretary of State towards Hong Kong, because it gives no regards to Hong Kong's constant upholding of "one country, two systems". We have explained very clearly why the national security law is needed, i.e. largely to plug the loophole in our constitutional arrangement. We accept that we have not been able to fulfil our constitutional obligation to enact this part of the law under Article 23 of the Basic Law. Therefore, particularly in the light of things that happened in the last two years, the social unrest and the problems that we encountered, the Central Government has taken this exceptional step to introduce (the national security law) to plug this loophole. We see there is a need to do so.

As regards the US' position, I think, in my personal view, it is hypocritical to say on the one hand that you stand by or support the people of Hong Kong, but (on the other hand) what the US Government is trying to do would intend to harm Hong Kong's interests. It is also self-kidding to say that this would only harm one side of the equation. Actually, trading relations is a two-way street. So our reaction and our forecast is that it would hurt the bilateral relations between Hong Kong and the US. Look at the

trade figures, we have seen a major decline between the US and China, and also between Hong Kong and the US, as a result of the trade tension between the two (the US and China). We have been suffering from the collateral damage of the US-China trade tension, and I believe this would also harm further the US' interest in Hong Kong, which we have all along considered it as a mutual benefit.

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