

Transcript of remarks by CE at media session before ExCo meeting

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, at a media session before the Executive Council meeting this morning (October 15):

Reporter: Three questions. One, Maria Tam said Hong Kong should consider setting up a special court for riot cases related to the anti-government protest. Is this something that you will look into? And what is your comments about the US senator Josh Hawley's criticism that Hong Kong is turning into a police state? And can you tell us in English about the presentation arrangement of the Policy Address tomorrow? And you mentioned a new addition, the Supplement to the Policy Address, could you tell us more in English? Thank you.

Chief Executive: First of all, I'm sure you know, one of the most important core values in Hong Kong is the rule of law. And one of the most important features underpinning the rule of law is an independent judiciary. I will not interfere or comment on the arrangements in the judiciary to deal with a large number of cases arising from this incident. That is my first reply.

As far as individual US senators coming to Hong Kong meeting with a lot of people and making comments, I have to say that I thought their visit to Hong Kong would enable them to see the actual situation in a comprehensive and objective manner. But unfortunately, the feedback that I've got is most of them, or several of them coming here, have very preconceived views about Hong Kong's situation, and that's why for this particular senator to describe Hong Kong as becoming a police state is totally irresponsible and unfounded. The Hong Kong Police Force is a highly professional and civilised force. I would challenge every politician to ask themselves if the large extent of violent act and all those petrol bombs and arson and attacks –really deadly attacks on policemen – happened in their own country, what would they do? What would their policemen do? My simple response is, to describe Hong Kong as a police state is totally unfounded and what's more, we have very important mechanisms providing checks and balances in every aspect of our law enforcement.

As far as my 2019 Policy Address, as you know, this is sort of a mid-term Policy Address, so I have decided some time ago, well before this social unrest, that perhaps it's a good idea to give a comprehensive account of what we have done since we took office on July 1, 2017. In addition to the Policy Address itself, we have produced what we call a Policy Address Supplement. The Policy Address Supplement provides an account of each and every of the policy areas starting from our philosophy – what is our philosophy in Housing? What is our philosophy in Education? And then supported by the progress that we have made in the last two years. I am happy to say that we have announced some 500 initiatives in the last two policy addresses and the

achievement rate is close to 97 per cent – 97 per cent of the initiatives have been either completed or are in progress according to the plan. And then we will present some of the challenges that we are facing and finally list out the new initiatives in this year's Policy Address. Despite the problems we are facing, which means we could not put in a lot of time and attention to the production of this Policy Address, we have come up with over 200 new initiatives in the various areas. And earlier on I have asked my principal officials that they could go out to talk about the Policy Address before my delivery, which is very unusual because previously every Policy Address and Budget was kept highly confidential – nobody should talk about it. But this year, because of uncertainties, the Financial Secretary has announced a whole range of initiatives to help the economy and provide relief to the people, the respective secretaries have talked about their new initiatives, some of which are rather major. For tomorrow's Policy Address speech that I will make in Legislative Council Chamber, I would be more focused, and I'm sure you would agree that the most important livelihood issue that the Chief Executive should address would be housing and land supply. Thank you very much.

Reporter: Ms Lam, the discovery of that homemade bomb and the detonation near a police car. The Police said that it's nearly identical to devices used in terrorist attacks around the world. Do you consider that homemade bomb to be an act of terrorism? Will it change your approach moving forward? And also we're hearing from police sources that there is concern that of those who have been arrested, many are being released rather quickly on bail, their cases not being processed quickly enough, therefore there's not much of a deterrent and many of them, police said, just go back out on the streets and continue to engage in the type of activity we saw over the weekend. Can you respond to that, please?

Chief Executive: Thank you very much. My first response to your question about the escalating violence and the use of these homemade bombs and also the very deadly attacks on the policemen is this gives us even stronger determination to end the violence. I have said on many occasions that violence will not give us the solution. Violence will only breed more violence. For concessions to be made simply because of escalating violence will only make the situation worse. On the other hand, we should consider every means to end the violence.

Secondly, about the bail treatment, this is exactly the same answer I have given to the question about special courts to dispose of cases arising from these social disturbances. This is a question for the prosecutor and for the courts. I'm not going to interfere or even comment on whether these bails have been granted appropriately.

Reporter:... (inaudible)

Chief Executive: As I said, I don't want to comment on judicial proceedings. I'm sure the prosecutor and the judge have taken all factors into account in coming to that arrangement.

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

