

November 12, 2020

Editor

The Straits Times

Email: stforum@sph.com.sg

Dear Editor,

I refer to the article “Lam’s deferred speech shows greater leaning on Beijing” published on November 7, 2020, which carries remarks inaccurately and inappropriately linking the timing of the 2020 Policy Address with Hong Kong’s degree of autonomy.

The Chief Executive (CE)’s annual Policy Address is of huge significance. CE, Mrs Carrie Lam, hopes to use the 2020 Policy Address to instill more confidence amongst Hong Kong people after the city has gone through a difficult year with the social unrest and the COVID-19 epidemic. CE has been putting forward policy proposals for the Central People’s Government (CPG) to consider and has received positive response lately. To dovetail with the latest development, CE conducted a duty visit to Beijing, Guangzhou and Shenzhen from 3 to 7 November to meet with senior officials in the respective ministries and commissions to discuss important economic and livelihood measures to be featured in the Policy Address and also to garner more support for Hong Kong in various aspects of the economy. It is therefore simplistic and baseless to interpret the postponement as indicative of Hong Kong’s decreasing autonomy.

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) is an inalienable part of the People’s Republic of China. It is a local administrative region directly under the Central People’s Government and enjoys a high degree of autonomy. As in any other country, national security legislation falls within the purview of the State, which is outside the limits of the HKSAR’s autonomy and squarely under the purview of the Central Authorities. Whilst the Basic Law requires the HKSAR to enact national security laws, it does not preclude the Central Authorities from enacting laws on national security. No country can or would turn a blind eye to threats to national security such as the emergence of local terrorism and separatism seen in Hong Kong in the past year. It is plainly incorrect to suggest that our sovereign, China, does not have the right to legislate, protect national security in the HKSAR.

The relevant law will not undermine “one country, two systems”. As always, the HKSAR will continue to exercise “Hong Kong people administering Hong Kong” and a high degree of autonomy.

Yours sincerely,

Wong Chun To
Director
Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in Singapore
HKSAR Government