

Transcript of remarks by Secretary for Justice on national security law

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Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Justice, Ms Teresa Cheng, SC, at a media session after attending a radio programme today (May 30):

Reporter: Secretary, you mentioned during the radio show that it is wrong for the US President to say that Hong Kong has changed into "one country, one system", and you also mentioned that concerns over this security law maybe in breach of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights is a wrong notion. Can you talk about that? Also, your concerns that now that the United States is considering sanctions on Hong Kong and China, the possibility of you being sanctioned?

Secretary for Justice: Insofar as the alleged basis of taking the sanctioning measures, it is said that we are becoming "one country, one system" with loss of autonomy, that is completely false and wrong. As a matter of fact, people often forget that the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region is part of China, we are one country. Without "One Country", there is not any basis to talk about "Two Systems". Therefore, insofar as the national security is concerned, as in any other country in the world, this is a matter that belongs to the central authorities, whether it is a unitary or federal state. China is a unitary state, and the United States is a federal state. The United States passed its national security laws, so can China. Therefore, it is within the sovereign right of each state to pass relevant national security laws. Insofar as that is concerned, any other state that tries to use coercion or whatever means with a view to interfering with the sovereign right of a state to pass its own national security law is arguably infringing on the principle of non-intervention under public international law, and that is not acceptable.

As to the suggestion of certain individuals or perhaps a particular region being sanctioned as a result of China passing the national security law, we step back and look at it in this way: national security is of prime importance to any sovereign state, and any sovereign state must, as a matter of its sovereign right, and indeed duty, to protect the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of any state. Therefore, passing national security law is something that any state has to do. If we in Hong Kong has not been able to pass it, notwithstanding Article 23 of the Basic Law, Central Authorities taking these actions are not only legal but necessary and needed. Thank you.

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

Ends/Saturday, May 30, 2020