

Transcript of S for J's media session

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Following is the transcript (English portion) of the question-and-answer session of the media session given by the Secretary for Justice, Mr Wong Yan Lung, SC at the Central Government Offices New Annexe Conference Hall today (October 20):

Reporter: Mr Wong, congratulations on your appointment first of all. You referred to conscience. I'm wondering whether, in your discussions prior to your appointment, at any point with the Chief Executive, issues of law and morality, law and conscience came up. If they did, in what context? Did they ..... on your thoughts? Because people will be very interested in your personal character.

Secretary for Justice: So far as I can recall, in my discussions with the Chief Executive prior to my appointment, we did not have the opportunity to go into very specific issues, or be it case related or issues related. However, I think there is a common consensus on our part that we have to be faithful to what we believe in and work according to our conscience, albeit the situation is difficult, albeit there will be dilemma. I think in that context we share a very common attitude.

Reporter: Congratulations Mr Wong. Donald Tsang earlier said that both of you share common ground and you also work on the same wavelength. Now what if there is a certain policy that comes up where you and Donald Tsang don't really see eye to eye? And obviously a lot of members of your profession they do support universal suffrage for example, whereas the Government said yesterday we should take it slowly, one step at a time. So how would you resolve such conflict, if you might say conflict?

Secretary for Justice: As the saying goes, this is a very hypothetical question but of course I would not just dismiss it on that basis. I think I won't go into the issue of universal suffrage again. I've already mentioned something in response to some earlier questions. As far as I am concerned I see very clearly my role as Secretary for Justice in terms of upholding the rule of law and also it's my responsibility to ensure

the Government, including the Chief Executive, sees the importance of the rule of law and things must be done in accordance with the law - that's my responsibility. So if there should be any differences in opinion, then of course I would discharge my duty to give my advice independently and I really hope we can work things out that way by really be faithful to what we are responsible for.

Reporter: On the question of succession. With people leaving like Robert Allcock and Ian Wingfield, with retirements coming up, and having yourself marched on legal issues in the past, you know the difficulties of bringing in people from outside. So (a) how will you persuade outside legal talents to come in to fill these posts and do you think you might even have to go farther afield than Hong Kong in order to do it.

Secretary for Justice: In terms of recruitment I think I will not rule out any possibilities. In terms of how do I get good people in, I think first of all I would have to emphasise that I will share with the person my vision and my commitment to this job. If this person shares my view and my vision and he or she has the ability to do it, then probably that's the right person.

Reporter: What is that view.

Secretary for Justice: That view, in terms of my commitment to the rule of law which I have already outlined in detail in my opening speech.

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

Ends/Thursday, October 20, 2005

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