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From:

Date: 2006/11/29 Wed AM 12:10:38 CST

To: pa-consultation@cab.gov.hk

Subject: comments on the consultation document on further development of the political appointment system

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Dear Sir,

I would like to comment on the paper.

Before any further development of the political appointment system, the system should be first reviewed to assess its effectiveness. We all know that the appointment of principal officials was made by the former chief executive under very difficult situations where his chief secretaries did not give him enough support and at the same time, the civil service was alienated by the so called maintenance of political neutrality. Where civil servants who defended the government's policy was regarded by some as failure to maintain their political neutrality. This is the stupidest argument. The chief executive is the head of the government and all civil servants are working for the government and should give him full support. In the United States, the president, be him a Republican or Democrat, who is the chief executive always gets the full support from the civil service. I have never heard that the neutrality of the civil service has ever been touted in the United States nor have I heard it said again after the present chief executive took over the administration.

We all see that the principal officials appointed from outside the civil service with no administrative experience had found it hard to perform effectively especially when they did not get the support from the permanent secretaries e.g. the penny stock incident. There is a certain rivalry between the POs and permanent secretaries. At the same time, additional workload was incurred by civil servants in nurturing and spoon-feeding them. Take for example, in preparing a PO to answer a simple LegCo question could be a Herculean task for staff of the bureau. First, the answers and supplementary Q and As are prepared by the assistant secretaries. They are hashed and edited as they go up

the echelons of principal assistant secretaries, deputy secretaries and the permanent secretaries. Then, PO needs to be briefed thoroughly and supported at LegCo. I shudder to think the additional staff and efforts required if some political party members as rumoured from outside the civil service are appointed as POs in the new term.

I suggest that the present PO system be scraped. Instead, the permanent secretary posts should be made non-civil service posts and the holders should be made politically accountable. They could be promoted from within the civil service provided they forego their civil service status and be held accountable for any blunders. All civil servants should pledge allegiance to the chief executive otherwise they have to go.

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(Editor's Note: The sender requested anonymity.)