

Activists on fruitless mission to register here

26 Aug. 1989

By Fan Cheuk-wan of our China Desk

THE chairman and other senior members of an American-based pro-democracy organisation outlawed by China will come to Hongkong soon to press for local registration.

Their mission is certain to be fruitless, as the Hongkong Government, under diplomatic pressure from Beijing, will not approve the application.

The New York-based Chinese Alliance for Democracy, branded "reactionary" by China, will attempt to register as a local civic organisation when its chairman, Mr Hu Ping, makes his first visit to Hongkong early next month.

Reliable Government sources told *The Hongkong Standard* the application would be refused.

They said the Government wanted to avoid the impression that Hongkong was being used as a "subversive base" against Beijing.

Sources said the local branch of the Xinhua News Agency had told the Government of China's "great concern" about the alliance's Hongkong plans.

They said the official Chinese bodies in Beijing handling Hongkong affairs had relayed a similar message to the British Embassy there, expressing concern that Hongkong could become a "subversive base".

The alliance has been repeatedly accused by the Chinese authorities of instigating the recent "counter-revolutionary rebellion" in Beijing.

Mr Ji Shaoxiang, Director of the Foreign Affairs Department of the local Xinhua branch, refused to comment. "We will settle this problem through diplomatic channels," he said. "It is a matter between China and Britain."

But a Chinese source said Mr Ji's department had told the Hongkong Government that Beijing did not want to see the alliance registered as a

■ Shenzhen to speed up transplant of Hongkong laws:

Page 6 ►

legal organisation here. Mr Wang Min, director of the group's Hongkong office, said yesterday the alliance would stand firm in its intention to carry on political activities in the territory even without registration.

"The alliance is a Chinese organisation to promote democracy in China. But it is too remote for us to launch our campaign across the Pacific Ocean. Hongkong is a strategic base for us to expand our influence," he said.

"Hongkong should be established as a testing ground for democracy in China. As 1997 approaches, Hongkong can offer more experience of democratic development for the mainland.

"We consider our organisation a legal group to promote democracy in China. If we fail to register for the first time, we'll try the next time, the third time and infinite times."

If registration continued to be denied, he said, the group would use the office of its magazine, *China Spring* which was registered here last spring, as a base.

Mr Wang added that leaders of his organisation, Hu Ping, Xu Bantai and Chen Jun, would visit Hongkong between September and October to take part in pro-democracy activities.

Mr Xu is the director of the alliance and one of the five overseas Chinese students invited to visit Taiwan last December.

Mr Chen, a writer for the *China Spring*, was the dissident who initiated the first signature campaign of 33 famous Chinese intellectuals to appeal for the release of prominent dissident, Wei Jingsheng, in February.