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A 'tripartite' system

THROUGH your columns, allow me to add my own suggestions to the 1997 issue.

After China re-asserts its sovereignty over Hongkong, the territory should be governed by a "tripartite" system comprising Hongkong, China and Britain, each having representatives in a three-party 36-member legislative assembly.

The delegates from both China and Britain could number eight each with HK making up the remaining 20. The assembly would be chaired by a Beijing-appointed first minister or mayor who would have no executive power, and whose function would be only to preside over assembly meetings.

All 20 members from HK should be locally elected, and they would be looking after the routine administration aspects. Any legislation would have to be submitted to the assembly and

passed with a simple majority, or, for important issues, perhaps with a three-quarter majority.

In this configuration, the British would be reasonably represented to protect whatever vested interests it may have remaining after 1997. The Chinese too would have their share of say in all internal issues. The exact number of delegates, the method with which laws are enacted, and other affiliated details could be worked out in the current Sino-British negotiations.

Foreign affairs of a national nature including defence would be left in the hands of China. There are good grounds also to let Beijing manage internal security as well, but the legal apparatus should, of course, be similar to those prevailing at the moment.

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