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M. Parkis
Legco = China

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Allen Lee turns towards Beijing

FORMER senior legislator Mr Allen Lee Peng-fei has signalled a clear shift towards Beijing in the wake of the formal inauguration of his Co-operative Resources Centre – a group of conservative councillors that may evolve into a political party.

Mr Lee told the *Sunday Morning Post* he intended to devote more time to building a close working relationship with mainland leaders, and revealed he had received a letter from Beijing's top official on Hongkong affairs, Mr Lu Ping, welcoming regular meetings between the two men.

In sharp contrast to his past criticism of China's refusal to recognise Legco, the former senior member indicated he understood Beijing's reluctance to do so.

"China regards this Legco as anti-China," he said. "It's very difficult at this stage for China to recognise Legco and they well may have good reasons for that."

Mr Lee also sympathised with Beijing's refusal to have any contacts with local liberals, whom it accuses of plot-

By DANNY GITTINGS

ting to overthrow the communist system.

"I would certainly understand that if I was sitting in Beijing," he said.

Mr Lee's comments represent a major shift from his position two months ago when he publicly criticised China's hard-line stance on the issue, and called for a more aggressive approach to seeking recognition, saying the presence of liberals on Legco was irrelevant.

And, in a further indication of a shift towards Beijing, Mr Lee echoed China's labelling of Legco as a local legislature subordinate to Britain's parliament – although he refused to endorse the mainland's description of it as a purely advisory body.

"In constitutional terms, if two sovereign states [Britain and China] agree on something then it's hard to imagine a local legislature overturning it," he said, in an implicit criticism of Legco's rejection of the Court of Final Appeal agreement.