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SIR Philip Haddon Cave's clarification of the objectives of the 1984 White Paper in his speech to the Federation of Hongkong Industries on April 10 is both helpful and timely. There will be arguments about whether the changes go far enough. But I would be very surprised if there was substantial disagreement with the three objectives, or the three principles, that Sir Philip said the Government bore in mind when the plans on the White Paper were being finalised.

Changing the structure of government slowly, and developing what has proved successful in the past, so as not to disturb the foundation upon which Hongkong's past success has been built, would surely seem to make good sense; especially to a society that has always assumed a direct correlation between economic prosperity and political stability.

So it is not what has been put in the White Paper, and Sir Philip's speech, that worries me, but what has been left out. And what has been left out is any reason for believing that the more representative Legislative Council we are going to get, will produce the more accountable government we have been promised.

This is an absolutely fundamental issue, because if Hongkong people are to have an effective voice in how Hongkong is run in the future, the Government's accountability to them has got to be real, and not cosmetic.

The basic assumption the public is asked to accept in the White Paper, is that by phasing out of the Legislative Council, citizens selected by the Governor, and phasing in citizens elected by the community and by interest groups, a system of government will result "that is rooted firmly in the community and, thereby, made directly accountable to the people of Hongkong". — Sir Philip's first objective.

This assumption is highly questionable. It is likely to be true only to the limited extent that the Civil Service, that now holds a virtual monopoly of executive power, may be obliged to have more regard for the views of a

broad spectrum of public opinion, in a Legislature democratised on the lines proposed. That will be all.

If we test the assumption on the basis of the performance of elected members of the Urban Council, who were appointed to serve on the Legislative and Executive Councils in the past, there is simply no evidence to suggest that they have been more forceful or effective in holding officials accountable for the way they exercise power than the appointed members have been. In fact, their performance has been worse than that of the best appointed members.

What seems to happen is that once a citizen has become part of the establishment, he sees his primary role as defending the monolithic authority of the Government. In the interests of stability he will tend to curb his criticism, even when he knows that what the officials are doing would not have the support of the community.

This has been the invariable characteristic of "Unofficial" participation in central Government during the 30 years in which I have been closely associated with it. In the past, four years I have seen little change in this generally supportive conduct.

People who imagine that the "democratisation" of the Legislative Council is going to produce a vocal opposition that will see to it that the Government always acts in Hongkong's best interests, and will form a bulwark to resist pressures on the Government of Hongkong Special Administrative Region, from Peking, in my view are living in cloud cuckoo land.

Let us suppose that the Peking Government comes under severe internal pressure to allow substantial immigration into the

promised land of the HKSAR, and the Chief Executive of the SAR has been told that this has to happen. Who on the Legislative Council is going to stand up and oppose it?

Or, shall we say, Hongkong's export quotas have been unilaterally slashed by foreign countries to enable them to accommodate China's demands for greater access into Hongkong's traditional export markets. Who, on the Legislative Council, is going to press the Government to contest it?

As we move closer to 1997, the unlikelihood of fighting a personal battle for Hongkong when its interests are in conflict with China's will become more and more obvious.

It is common knowledge that in 1981, a British Governor of Hongkong was able to dissuade angry Unofficials from flying to London to stand up for Hongkong people against the British Nationality Act. Who, on the future Legislative Council will be so bold as to defy the Chief Executive of the HKSAR and fly to Peking to protest against a proposal to admit under-qualified doctors, lawyers or accountants to practise in Hongkong, or resist the introduction of a two child birth control policy?

None of these examples may come to pass. But sooner or later, and probably sooner, the pressures from Peking are going to come because, as that unpopular politician, Mr Edward Heath, said in the House of Commons at one debate on the future of Hongkong, sovereignty cannot be separated from administration.

Those pressures are unlikely to be applied openly. But when the present Secretary posts have been filled by Peking appointed Chinese civil servants, instead of London appointed British civil servants, it will be no difficult

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matter to persuade the top officials of the Government of the HKSAR that whatever Hongkong people may feel about it, pursuing pro-Hongkong policies, irrespective of China's views will not be in anyone's interest.

This government scenario is not a figment of my imagination. It is the only scenario that can emerge, give the conditions laid down by China in the Sino-British agreement concerning the transfer of the Government of Hongkong to the HKSAR, and the proposals in the White Paper on the future development of representative government in Hongkong.

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1997, than the efforts of a few elected Unofficial-councillors, with one uneasy eye on Peking, and a determination not to give offence.

Getting the institutions in place to achieve public accountability on the part of the official side of the Government has become a matter of the greatest urgency and importance, yet it does not receive a single-mention either in the White Paper, or in Sir Philip's speech.

The reason is not hard to find. Addressing the Overseas Bankers Club at the Guildhall in London on February 1, 1982, Sir Philip had this to say:

"In Hongkong, despite the absence of an orthodox parliamentary system, bureaucracy is not dictatorial and is directly and continually, as opposed to discontinuously, accountable to the community it governs for its performance."

Since the White Paper proposals now make up for the absence of an orthodox parliamentary system, what more is there to do?

Let us hope that Sir Philip's successor will realise that if the promises given to the Hongkong people by the Peking, Hongkong and British Governments, that they will be permitted to manage their own internal affairs after 1997, are to be honoured, Hongkong civil servants will either have to devolve the power they hold upon the Legislative Council, or submit their own exercise of that power to the most rigorous public surveillance. And both would be desirable.

It is not enough that this process should be pursued piecemeal. There has got to be a programme of administrative reforms to ensure that by 1990, at the very latest, there are, in place, the monitoring devices that have been found essential supplements to representative government in most democratic countries in the free world. If they are not, "self rule for Hongkong people" will turn out to be the sham it was probably intended to be all along.

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sure that the data on which civil servants base policies and make decisions are available to the public and the media, *as of right*: to ensure that the discussion of policy is done as far as possible, in public, and not in private; to subject top civil servants to frequent questioning, in a public forum, on the way they are carrying out their responsibilities; and to see that complaints against administrative decisions are investigated promptly by organisations that are not part of the Government.

Over the years of British rule, the Hongkong community has been very successful in stopping the Hongkong Government from imposing upon it things, cooked up behind the scenes, that it was not prepared to tolerate. On those occasions people made the Government change its mind, not by means of Unofficials leadership but by widespread protest, usually expressed in a responsible way, through community organisations of various kinds and the media.

The rejection of Summer Time; the protests over the reassessment of rateable values, and the shortage of small coins; the reconvening of the inquest into the death of a pedestrian shot in cold blood by a police detective when a verdict of manslaughter was returned, are obvious cases from recent years.

Dare I suggest that the reconsideration of the Trial of Commercial Crimes Bill is the latest example?

Provided the Hongkong public can get to know what the civil service is up to, it will find ways of making its dissatisfactions known. Such pressures, collectively expressed, and affording the individual complainants a degree of security through anonymity, are likely to be much more effective, after

The White Paper proposals have no hope of making the Government accountable to the people of Hongkong unless a new breed of Unofficial emerges between now and 1997. Such men and women will have to have the courage to openly oppose the Government and, when the need arises, to court the displeasure of the Peking Government by opposing measures that seem to favour China at the expense of Hongkong.

One of two of our present Unofficials are made of such stuff. To their credit they showed it in 1983 and last year, but got small thanks. There is little chance that others will follow their lead and also run the risk of being branded as unpatriotic Chinese. Survival, not martyrdom, is the usual objective of Hongkong people.

But if representative government on the lines of the White Paper will not ensure that civil servants are kept firmly under the control of the Legislative Council, there are other means of preventing them from acting in ways that are not acceptable to the community. Unfortunately these receive no mention at all in the White Paper.

Broadly speaking the aims are to make