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Advisers favour tough stance on political talks

BY DENISE WONG AND JOE WU

MOST China advisers in Hongkong say Beijing should not hold talks with Britain over the territory's political development unless Governor Chris Patten drops his reform proposals.

About 200 local delegates to China's top advisory bodies met Xinhua News Agency director Zhou Nan to discuss Hongkong's political development.

The group included delegates to the National People's Congress (NPC), the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) and Guangdong province People's Political Consultative Conference.

CPPCC delegate Tsui Simin said Mr Zhou stressed China was sincere in wanting to discuss with Britain political development and implementing the Basic Law.

He said most members were of the view that negotiations should not be based on Mr Patten's proposals but on convergence with the Joint Declaration, Basic Law and previous understanding between the two governments.

NPC delegate Cheng Yiu-tong said Mr Zhou had dismissed as rumour, claims that China would not allow legislators who supported Mr Patten's proposal to stay on the legislature "through train" after 1997.

Kenneth Chow, a Guangdong province PPCC, said the Governor should resign if legislators voted down his proposal.

"In Western parliaments, such a vote would mean a vote of no confidence for the person formulating the policy. I urge Mr Patten to declare he will step down if the Legislative Council votes down his package," he said.