

也址:旺角海富苑海欣閣地下陳偉強議員辦事處

電話: 2626 1057 手機: 6371 1889

電郵/MSN: waikeungchan@hotmail.com

傳真: 2626 1079

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No more on her majesty's service

Chan Wai-keung

To be sure, the display of the British colonial flags by some Hong Kong youngsters during their anti- government demonstrations is perplexing and deplorable to our mainland compatriots. However, Most of Hong Kong people are not taking this gesture of defiance against our motherland seriously. Instead, they have just wrongly deemed it as a youthful whim which is innocuous to the society.

Worse still, a more peculiar and woeful phenomenon which many Hong Kong people have overlooked is that nowadays some of our HKSAR civil servants are still using colonial government envelopes with the franking "on her majesty's service (O.H.M.S)" in their official business. As Chinese nationals, we, especially our HKSAR government, should not take these unpatriotic deeds lightly.

According to a well-established Chinese newspaper, more and more members of the public recently received some HKSAR official correspondence with O.H.M.S envelopes. A telling example is my own case. A government department recently also used an O.H.M.S envelope to send me a letter of reply in response to my written enquires. Outraged and saddened by the receipt of this colonial envelope which symbolized our civil servants' past allegiance to the British queen, I immediately telephoned the official concerned and asked why she was still using a colonial envelope. She was just replied: "I was just careless; it was no big deal at all." Infuriated by her indifference to my concern, I retorted: "On the contrary, it is really a big deal which is related to our national dignity. Your mistake is a disgrace to our government...It is probably unconstitutional for an official like you to use an O.H.M.S. envelope. I demand that you formally withdraw the envelope and offer an apology to me." Unfortunately, she eventually



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hung up on me and ignored my demand.

It has been fifteen years after the handover of Hong Kong to our motherland, China. Since July 1997, the HKSAR government has definitely forbidden our civil servants to use any stationery with O.H.M.S symbols. But, why did our civil servants still possess the colonial envelopes? Why were the colonial stationary still in use? Were they supposed to discard them shortly after the handover?

The civil servants are improperly using the O.H.M.S. envelopes probably for several reasons. Firstly, some civil servants, probably feeling nostalgic for colonial period, had a pathetic passion for collecting these colonial envelopes. In disregard of government rules, some of them may have even clandestinely kept the colonial stationeries at their own governmental offices as a pastime.

Secondly, after the handover, the HKSAR government has changed the official franking from "On her majesty's service" to "On government service" in English wordings. Nevertheless, it is notable that the English phrase structure of the current official franking is too similar to that of the colonial one. It is so easy for the civil servants to mix up the current HKSAR official envelopes with the O.H.M.S envelopes which were originally amassed at their office just for fun.

Thirdly, trained in colonial tradition, most of our civil servants are still less ideologically sensitive to some political symbols which are antithetical to our national identity.

Official franking symbolizes our national identity. Imagine that one day our officials on behalf our chief executive used an O.H.M.S. envelope to mail a correspondence to the President of the United States, it would certainly turned to be an international laughingstock.

It is time for our government to tackle this ludicrous mix-up with the envelopes. Sources say that Carrie Lam, the chief secretary for administration, has by email cautioned all civil servants against using the colonial envelopes. Lam's warning email is indeed a step in the right direction.

Yet, further actions should be taken to forestall the misuse of the colonial



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stationary. Without hesitation, the HKSAR government should penalize the civil servants who get caught using or storing up the colonial envelopes at their offices. More importantly, given that the English franking on the current official envelope is almost identical to the colonial one in phrase structure, the authorities should consider revising its wordings again to get rid of the colonial tinge and to prevent the shameful mix-up with the envelopes.

Turning a blind eye to this national disgrace in our officialdom would be politically disastrous. While our civil servants are setting a bad example by misusing the British national symbols, the anti-Beijing youngsters will be more emboldened to unfurl the colonial flags in the pursuit of their China-bashing.

This paper is submitted to the meeting of Yau Tsim Mong District Council of 13 December 2012 for discussion. I strongly urge the Civil Service Bureau to send a representative to attend the meeting in response to our questions.

Chan Wai-keung Yau Tsim Momg District Councillor

繼續效忠 英女皇?

(中文摘要) (本文件內容以英文版作準)

沒有親眼見過的人或許不會相信,香港回歸至今十多年,政府部門不少寄出的信件,在信封上竟然仍用英文印上「向英女皇效忠」的字句,真是讓人笑掉大牙!

回歸十多年後,香港有政府部門仍用印有「向英女皇效忠」字樣的信封,有人認爲是基於環保原因;有人說是無心之失;也有人認爲是有部分政府公務員爲了表示對特區政府不滿,刻意爲之的惡作劇。



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有人說這批信封是回歸前剩下,一直基於環保理由而未有拋棄,所以有公務員抱着「能用則用」的原則而繼續採用。假如真是基於上述原因,則真是再荒誕不過的理由。試想,假如北京新近發掘出一批清朝皇帝用剩的聖旨,胡錦濤決定基於環保原則,能用則用,我們十八大的文件就印刷在這批環保聖旨之上,給所有予會代表人手一份,一起捧着在會上閱讀。只不過聖旨的第一句會由「奉天承運皇帝詔曰」,改作「同志們好」而已。你道這是如何荒誕滑稽之事?

而偏偏這樣的荒誕事卻天天在香港上演!



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附件1:

ON HER MAJESTY'S SERVICE 香港政府公函

CONFIDENTIAL 機密

九龍旺角海富苑 海欣閣地下 油尖旺區議會民選議員 陳偉強議員辦事處 陳偉強議員

G E, 15

CONFIDENTIAL 機密



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附件 2: 東方日報 | 2012-11-03

漁護署公函仍附殖民地色彩

【專案組報道】香港回歸已十五年,竟仍有政府部門「跟官咁耐唔知官姓乜」。近日有市 民接獲政府部門信函,信封竟是香港在英國殖民統治年代的產物,並有「爲英女王陛下 效忠」字眼。政協委員劉夢熊指類似事件已接二連三,反映政府官員政治意識不足。

市民接獲漁護署的信件,發現信封竟仍沿用英國殖民政府的標誌。

上月,有市民收到漁護署信件,發現信封印上「ON HER MAJESTY'S SERVICE 香港政府公函」字樣,有關信封應是九七年前香港仍屬英國殖民地時所採用,市民對於香港回歸十五年,政府部門竟使用舊信封,感到奇怪。

官員欠政治意識

本報翻查有關資料,「ON HER MAJESTY'S SERVICE 香港政府公函」解作「爲英女王陛下效忠」,是本港在英國殖民地統治年代,所有政府公函的標誌,九七年香港回歸中國後,已改爲「香港政府公函 ON GOVERNMENT SERVICE」。

政協委員劉夢熊表示,事件反映部分官員政治意識不足:「香港已回歸中國,即係改朝換代,不少官員仍有如『桃花源中人,不知有漢,無論魏晉?』」他建議政府盡快改善,免影響管治威信。

油尖旺區議員陳偉強亦稱,一〇年曾接獲運輸署信件,信封同樣是殖民地年代的標誌,懷疑有官員保存部分英國殖民政府信封,使用時沒有看清楚,或欠缺政治意識。

漁護署發言人表示,目前使用的信封均由懲教署製造及供應,上面印有「香港政府公函 ON GOVERNMENT SERVICE」字樣,對於個別職員未有使用合適信封,該署已再次提醒同事,要注意通用公函式樣。



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附件 3:東方日報 | 2010-02-04

用英女王信封運輸署爲環保?

香港回歸十二年多,政府一早已將好多英國殖民地色彩嘅事物入土爲安,但有區議員近 日就收到政府一封「爲英女王陛下效忠」嘅信件。油尖旺區議員陳偉強最近去信運輸署 九龍區交通工程部,投訴工程師濫用停車許可證,該署派人送上覆函,但信封又黃又舊, 封面仲印上「ON HER MAJESTY'S SERVICE (爲英女王陛下效忠)」,陳偉強當堂嚇咗一跳。

辯稱「一時唔小心」

陳偉強就呢個陳年信封向運輸署查問,獲得回覆係「一時唔小心」,但好似唔當係乜嘢一 回事, 唔誦係爲咗環保?

陳偉強批評,香港回歸十二年多,相信各政府部門有充裕時間更換內部前殖民地物資, 但至今竟然仲有呢啲殖民地信封存在,仲要使用送埋出街,確實極爲諷刺,亦對國家好 大嘅侮辱。佢估計其他區議員可能收過呢類信封,只係佢容忍唔到有咁嘅情況喎!