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## **JULY 1, 1997**

At midnight on June 30, 1997, British rule of Hong Kong will end. The island of Hong Kong, as well as the territories of Kowloon and the New Territories, will revert to Chinese sovereignty. Thereafter, the area will be known as the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR).

More than a decade ago, China and the United Kingdom began discussions to establish the conditions for the transition of Hong Kong's sovereignty. These discussions led to an agreement between the two countries in 1984. Referred to as the Joint Declaration, it forms the legal and political basis for the transition. The declaration was confirmed in the laws of China in 1990 with the enactment of legislation by the National People's Congress. That legislation is referred to as the Basic Law.

The Basic Law reflects the principle of "One Country, Two Systems" in the post-transition period. It generally preserves institutions and the way of life in Hong Kong, and grants considerable autonomy for the next 50 years