

cc: lan Jan 23/8



FROM: THE RT. HON. JULIAN AMERY, M.P.

112, EATON SQUARE,
SWIW 9AA
TEL: 01-235 1543
01-235 7409

22/8

19th August, 1982.

Dear Margaret,

I see from the press that you have been carefully briefed by our Chinese experts in preparation for your visit to China.

I don't pretend to be an expert in any way on that sub-continent but having spent 6 months on Chiang Kai Shek's staff during the war and since then made two visits each to Taiwan and later to Communist China I have given some thought to Chinese history. I would therefore venture to make one simple point.

China has enjoyed periods of unity - notably under the Ming (South Chinese) and under the Ching (Manchurian) dynasties. But complete unity has usually been short-lived. The Communist regime in China is predominantly a northern regime. The Gang of Four may well represent a very substantial part of the Communist Party. It is difficult today to imagine Taiwan making a come back, but if there were to be another civil war the Taiwan army, backed by substantial stocks of rice, sugar and dollars might still have a part to play. I would not dream of prophesying beyond suggesting that Chinese unity is precarious. The Soviets will also be working for disruption both from Vietnam and Vladivostok.

The whole Chinese picture may thus look very different in 10 or 15 years time from what it is today. While therefore it may be difficult to avoid discussing the future of Hong Kong, there may be a case for playing for time unless of course solutions are proposed from the Chinese side which are clearly advantageous to us. Given a vastly overpopulated country and one very short of natural resources in a world as deeply divided as ours is today, the odds on China remaining united look fairly long.

Yours,
Julian Amery

The Rt. Hon. Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, MP