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TELNO 616 OF 4 OCTOBER
INFO PRIORITY HONG KONG (POLITICAL ADVISER).

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FUTURE OF HONG KONG: CHINESE PRESS COMMENT

1. THE CHINESE PRESS ON 1 OCTOBER PUBLISHED AN NCNA COMMENTARY IN BOTH CHINESE AND ENGLISH, TAKING ISSUE WITH THE STATEMENT MADE BY THE PRIME MINISTER IN HONG KONG ON 27 SEPTEMBER ABOUT THE CONTINUED VALIDITY OF THE TREATIES.
2. THE COMMENTARY RESTATED THE INEQUALITY OF THE TREATIES, WHICH HAD NEVER BEEN ACCEPTABLE TO THE CHINESE PEOPLE. IT WAS THE SACRED RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE TO RECOVER SOVEREIGNTY OVER HONG KONG. IT CONTINUED WITH A STRONG ATTACK ON BRITISH IMPERIALISM IN THE 19TH CENTURY, ADDING THAT QUOTE THE CHINESE PEOPLE HAVE ALWAYS CONSIDERED THESE TREATIES ILLEGAL AND VOID UNQUOTE.
3. ALTHOUGH THE COMMENTARY ABSOLVES THE BRITISH PEOPLE OF BLAME FOR WHAT HAPPENED A CENTURY AGO, IT ADDS THAT QUOTE IF ANYONE TODAY STILL TRIES TO MAINTAIN THESE UNEQUAL TREATIES IT WILL ONLY AWAKEN THE MEMORIES OF THE BRITISH IMPERIALIST INVASION OF CHINA IN THE MINDS OF THE PEOPLE IN CHINA, BRITAIN AND THE WHOLE WORLD UNQUOTE.
4. THE COMMENTARY ALSO TOOK UP THE PRIME MINISTER'S ASSERTION OF BRITAIN'S MORAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR HONG. IT SAID QUOTE HONG KONG IS AN IMPORTANT MATTER OF STATE SOVEREIGNTY AND NATIONAL INTEREST CONCERNING ONE BILLION CHINESE PEOPLE (INCLUDING CHINESE RESIDENTS OF HONG KONG); ONLY THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT HAS THE RIGHT TO SAY IT HAS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF A SOVEREIGN STATE FOR THE CHINESE RESIDENTS OF HONG KONG UNQUOTE.
5. THE CONCLUSION WAS SOMEWHAT SOFTER. THE COMMENTARY REFERRED TO THE AGREEMENT TO HOLD TALKS WITH THE COMMON AIM OF MAINTAINING THE PROSPERITY AND STABILITY OF HONG KONG AND TO THAT PART OF ZHAO'S WELCOMING BANQUET SPEECH IN WHICH HE SAID THAT SUCH PROBLEMS OF

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HISTORY ARE QUOTE NOT DIFFICULT TO SOLVE AS LONG AS BOTH SIDES APPROACH AND DEVELOP SINO-BRITISH RELATIONS IN A LONG-TERM STRATEGIC PERSPECTIVE AND TAKE THE FIVE PRINCIPLES OF PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE AS THE BASIS FOR DEALING WITH PROBLEMS EXISTING BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES UNQUOTE.

COMMENT

THIS WAS A STRONGLY WORDED NATIONALISTIC PIECE, APPEARING ON CHINA'S NATIONAL DAY. IT IS THE MINIMUM RESPONSE WHICH I WOULD HAVE EXPECTED TO THE PRIME MINISTER'S FORTHRIGHT REMARKS IN HONG KONG. WE SHOULD I THINK TAKE SOME COMFORT FROM THE FURTHER REFERENCE TO THE PROSPERITY AND STABILITY OF HONG KONG, AND TO THE AGREEMENT TO HOLD TALKS, THOUGH PARA 3 ABOVE HAS A TOUCH OF MENACE.

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MY TELNO 1109 **FUTURE OF HONG KONG: PRESS COMMENT**

1. **HONG KONG'S COMMUNIST NEWSPAPERS PUBLISHED A FURTHER SERIES OF ARTICLES ON THE SAME THEME AS THOSE REPORTED IN MY T U R ON 1 OCTOBER.** WHE WEN WEI PO IN A FRONT PAGE STORY SAID THAT ALL PEKING NEWSPAPERS HAD FEATURED STORIES ON THE HONG KONG QUESTION, NOTABLY THE VARIOUS COMMENTS ON THE PRIME MINISTER'S REMARKS AT HER PRESS CONFERENCES. THE WEN WEI PO AND TA KUN PAO ALSO PUBLISHED EDITORIALS COVERING MUCH OF THE SAME GROUND.

2. **THE MAIN THEMES OF BOTH EDITORIALS WERE THE NOTION THAT HONG KONG CHINESE WERE PART OF THE GREATER CHINESE NATION AND THE CONSISTENCY OF THE PRC POSITION ON HONG KONG.** THE WEN WEI PO IN ITS EDITORIAL REFERRED TO THE CONCEPT OF HONG KONG AS A GOOSE WHICH LAYS GOLDEN EGGS FOR CHINA, BUT SAID THAT SOVEREIGNTY WAS NOT SOMETHING THAT COULD BE BOUGHT AND SOLD. THE TA KUN PAO EDITORIAL DWELT AT SOME LENGTH ON THE CONSISTENCY OF CHINESE ASSERTIONS OF SOVEREIGNTY OVER HONG KONG AND CHINESE FOREIGN POLICY IN GENERAL. THE EDITORIAL DISTINGUISHED BETWEEN THE MAY CHANGES WHICH HAD OCCURRED IN CHINA'S INTERNAL POLICY SINCE THE DEFEAT OF THE GANG OF FOUR AND THE CONTINUITY OF FOREIGN POLICY BASED ON THE FIVE PRINCIPLES OF PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE. IT INCLUDED A QUOTATION FROM HU YAO BANG'S SPEECH TO THE 12TH PARTY CONGRESS: "WE ARE PATRIOTS AND COULD NEVER ACCEPT ANY VIOLATION OF OUR NATION'S DIGNITY OR INTERESTS. WE ARE

PARTY CONGRESS: "WE ARE PATRIOTS AND COULD NEVER ACCEPT ANY VIOLATION OF OUR NATION'S DIGNITY OR INTERESTS. WE ARE INTERNATIONALISTS, AND WE UNDERSTAND CLEARLY THAT THE REALISATION OF CHINA'S NATIONAL INTERESTS CANNOT BE DIVIDED FROM THE INTERESTS OF MANKIND AS A WHOLE". THE IMPLICATION WAS THAT THIS PART OF HU'S SPEECH HAD SPECIAL SIGNIFICANCE FOR HONG KONG.

3. BOTH EDITORIALS SUGGESTED THAT THOSE WHO APPROACHED THE HONG KONG PROBLEM FROM A DIFFERENT POINT OF VIEW DID SO FROM "ULTERIOR MOTIVES". THE TA KUNG PAO SAID THAT WHILST THE BRITISH PEOPLE WERE NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ACTIONS OF 19TH CENTURY BRITISH IMPERIALISM, THE PRIME MINISTER SHOULD NOT HAVE MADE USE OF EVENTS SHAMEFUL TO CHINA: "TIMES HAVE CHANGED, THE OLD CHINA HAS BECOME THE NEW CHINA, THE CHINESE PEOPLE HAVE STOOD UP, BRITAIN HAS LONG SINCE LOST AN EMPIRE ON WHICH THE SUN NEVER SETS".

4. REPORTS IN SATURDAY'S NON-COMMUNIST CHINESE LANGUAGE PRESS INCLUDES REFERENCES TO THE TA KUNG PAO AND WEN WEI PO ARTICLES. EDITORIAL COMMENT WAS NOT SPECIFICALLY DIRECTED AT THESE ASSERTIONS OF THE CHINESE POSITION BUT DWELT ON GENERAL ANXIETY HERE ABOUT THE FUTURE.

5. THERE WERE NO ARTICLES ON THIS SUBJECT IN THE LOCAL COMMUNIST PRESS ON 3 AND 4 OCTOBER.

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PEKING TELNO 613: FUTURE OF HONG KONG.

THE MFA STATEMENT IS PROMINENTLY REPORTED IN TODAY'S ENGLISH AND CHINESE LANGUAGE PRESS. MANY CHINESE LANGUAGE NEWSPAPERS MAKE IT THEIR FRONT PAGE LEAD. THE LEFT WING TA KUNG PAO AND WEN WEI PO CARRY AN ADDITIONAL REPORT BY AN NCNA 'COMMENTATOR' WHICH EXPANDS UPON THE MFA STATEMENT. THIS IS ALSO REPORTED IN THE NON-COMMUNIST PRESS. THE WEN WEI PO AND TA KUNG PAO ALSO CARRY SHORT HISTORICAL ARTICLES ON THE THREE TREATIES AND THE OPIUM WARS. 2. THE NCNA COMMENTARY REFERS TO THE ACQUISITION OF HONG KONG IN THE 19TH CENTURY AS AN EXAMPLE OF BRITISH IMPERIALISM'S 'GUN-BOAT DIPLOMACY'. THE CHINESE PEOPLE CAN NEVER ACCEPT THAT THE TREATIES HAVE ANY VALIDITY. PICKING UP THE PRIME MINISTER'S REMARKS ABOUT MORAL RESPONSIBILITY TOWARDS HONG KONG, THE COMMENTARY SAYS THAT HONG KONG IS PART OF THE GREAT CHINESE NATION OF ONE BILLION PEOPLE AND THAT 'ONLY THE GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA HAS THE RIGHT TO SAY THAT IT HAS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF A SOVEREIGN COUNTRY TOWARDS THE CHINESE INHABITANTS OF HONG KONG'. THE COMMENTARY CONCLUDES BY REPEATING ZHAO ZIYANG'S REMARKS IN HIS SPEECH AT THE WELCOME BANQUET FOR THE PRIME MINISTER IN WHICH HE REFERRED TO SOLVING THE PROBLEM LEFT OVER FROM HISTORY ON THE BASIS OF A LONG-TERM STRATEGIC POINT OF VIEW AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE FIVE PRINCIPLES OF PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE.

3. ONLY THREE NON-COMMUNIST NEWSPAPERS PUBLISH EDITORIAL COMMENT. THE FINANCIAL DAILY (INDEPENDENT) URGES A MORE FLEXIBLE APPROACH ON BOTH SIDES AND SAYS THAT THE PRESENT EXCHANGES HAVE BEEN INSPIRED BY STUDENT PROTESTS TO WHICH GOVERNMENTS SHOULD NOT PAY TOO MUCH ATTENTION. THE HONG KONG ECONOMIC JOURNAL (INDEPENDENT) RECOGNISES CHINA'S ULTIMATE CLAIM TO SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE WHOLE OF HONG KONG BUT SAYS THAT THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT SHOULD NOT CONFUSE THIS CLAIM WITH HONG KONG'S STATUS IN LAW. THE TIN TIN DAILY NEWS (INDEPENDENT BUT SMALL CIRCULATION) SAYS THAT THE PRESENT TURN OF EVENTS IS WORRYING: THE TWO SIDES HAVE DIAMETRICALLY OPPOSED VIEWS ON THE SOVEREIGNTY ISSUE AND WILL HAVE TO MODIFY THEM BEFORE THE TALKS CAN START.

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