

cc R5
①Prime Minister

Agree that Mr. Pym should
give Messrs. Healey, Owen
and Steel an account of our
position on sovereignty, as in the
final paragraph of the letter:

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

18 April 1983

A.J.C. 15.
4Yes
mt

Dear John,

Hong Kong

In your letter of 7 January, you said that the Prime Minister agreed to Mr Pym briefing Mr Healey, Mr Steel and Dr Owen on the future of Hong Kong, but that it would be best if the briefing contained as little as possible on our attitude towards future sovereignty over Hong Kong.

This briefing has not yet been carried out. First the visit to London by the Governor and Ambassador meant that we were taking another look at policy. Thereafter it was agreed that Mr Pym should spea to a small group of Conservative backbenchers. This was done on 30 March. The group were generally content and raised no points of difficulty.

Mr Pym would like to brief the three Opposition members on Privy Councillor terms fairly soon (the exact timing is not yet decided). His aims would be on the one hand to discourage them, and their backbenchers, from raising points in the House or outside which could damage confidence in Hong Kong; and on the other to try to build up a responsible attitude among the Opposition against the time when the question of Hong Kong comes before the House.

Mr Pym believes that if the Opposition are to be effectively briefed we need to set out all the issues, including that of sovereignty, albeit in broad terms. We can hardly expect them not to raise it. Since, in our discussions with the Chinese, we are putting emphasis on the position of Parliament, it is important that leading members of the Opposition should know this (and the fact that the Chinese are leaking the contents of the Prime Minister's message reinforces this). Equally, they should

/understand

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understand that we do not rule out a move on sovereignty but that this would be subject to the very strong proviso that first an agreement must be worked out which would be acceptable to Parliament and the people of Hong Kong.

Yours ever

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John Holmes".

(J E Holmes)
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street

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Hong Kong
Future of
Pt 5



11 APR 1983



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19 April 1983

HONG KONG

Thank you for your letter of 18 April about briefing members of the Opposition Parties.

The Prime Minister agrees that Mr. Pym should give Mr. Healey, Mr. Steel and Dr. Owen an account of our position on sovereignty in the terms described in your last paragraph.

A. J. COLES

John Holmes, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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