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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

30 September 1983

copy sent today.

Dear John,

A.J.C. 4/10.

Hong Kong

As you know, we have run into a timing problem over the meeting the Prime Minister would like to have on Hong Kong prior to the arrival of the Unofficials next week. I understand that it is your strong preference to hold the meeting at 1630 on Wednesday. However, as you know, the Governor has to address Leg Co that day and cannot be back in London in time. The Foreign Secretary thinks that it would be very undesirable to hold this meeting without Sir E Youde. The main subject of discussion is likely to be how to handle ExCo and bring them into a more realistic position. The Governor's role in this is crucial and his advice is essential. There is, moreover, a risk that the preparatory meeting could leak, despite all our efforts. The news of a meeting on Hong Kong in the absence of the Governor could be taken very badly indeed in Hong Kong. The Foreign Secretary therefore very much hopes that the Prime Minister will agree, despite all the diary difficulties, to defer the preparatory meeting until Thursday.

If this is possible, he thinks it would be valuable if he could call on the Prime Minister on Wednesday (presumably at 1630) to go over the ground in advance and review the very difficult position we now find ourselves in. He would propose to be accompanied by Mr Luce, who has, of course, just come back from a week in Hong Kong.

Yours ever

(J E Holmes)
Private Secretary

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