

SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER

AT THE SIGNATURE CEREMONY OF THE JOINT DECLARATION

ON THE FUTURE OF HONG KONG

IN PEKING

19 DECEMBER

Your Excellency President
Li-Shien-Nien

YOUR EXCELLENCY CHAIRMAN DENG XIAOPING, YOUR EXCELLENCY

PREMIER ZHAO ZIYANG, YOUR EXCELLENCIES,

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.

THIS IS AN HISTORIC OCCASION, *and I am particularly pleased to see that Chairman Deng Xiaoping is able to be present.*

THE JOINT DECLARATION ON THE FUTURE OF HONG KONG, WHICH WE HAVE JUST SIGNED ON BEHALF OF OUR TWO GOVERNMENTS, IS A LANDMARK IN THE LIFE OF THE TERRITORY; IN THE COURSE OF ANGLO-CHINESE RELATIONS; AND IN THE HISTORY OF INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMACY.

THE AGREEMENT ESTABLISHES A FIRM BASIS FOR CONFIDENCE IN HONG KONG UP TO 1997 AND BEYOND, AND FOR ITS CONTINUED STABILITY, PROSPERITY AND GROWTH.

I REMEMBER WITH PLEASURE MY LAST VISIT TO CHINA IN
SEPTEMBER 1982 / AND MY DISCUSSIONS WITH
CHINESE LEADERS.

AT MY MEETING WITH CHAIRMAN DENG XIAOPING ON
THAT OCCASION / WE AGREED TO OPEN TALKS ON THE
FUTURE OF HONG KONG.

OUR COMMON AIM WAS TO MAINTAIN THE
TERRITORY'S STABILITY AND PROSPERITY.

IT IS IN A SPIRIT OF PRIDE / AND OF OPTIMISM
ABOUT THE FUTURE / THAT I NOW RETURN TO SIGN
THE AGREEMENT WHICH IS THE RESULT OF THOSE
TALKS.

I THINK YOU WILL AGREE THAT THE NEGOTIATIONS WERE NOT

ALWAYS EASY.

AT CERTAIN POINTS THERE WERE DIFFICULT
DECISIONS TO BE MADE ON BOTH SIDES.

THERE WERE MOMENTS OF TENSION.

TO OVERCOME THESE DIFFICULTIES WE NEEDED TO
DRAW ON A SHARED FUND OF GOODWILL; ON
FRIENDSHIP; AND ON A COMMON COMMITMENT TO
HONG KONG'S FUTURE.

THIS WAS WHAT MADE SUCCESS POSSIBLE.

I SHOULD LIKE TO PAY TRIBUTE TO THE
DEDICATION OF THE TWO NEGOTIATING TEAMS AND
ALL THEIR SUPPORTING ~~PERSONNEL~~ **STAFF**, UNDER THE
GUIDANCE OF SIR GEOFFREY HOWE AND STATE
COUNCILLOR AND FOREIGN MINISTER *Wu Shue Chen* WU XUEQIAN.

IT IS THANKS TO THE IMAGINATION AND RESOURCE

WHICH THEY SHOWED THAT WE CAN SIGN AN
AGREEMENT TODAY.

THE AGREEMENT FULLY MEETS THE POLITICAL REQUIREMENTS OF
BRITAIN AND CHINA, AS WELL AS THE INTERESTS
OF THE HONG KONG PEOPLE.

1 IT PROVIDES THE FRAMEWORK / IN WHICH, AS A
SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION OF THE PEOPLE'S
REPUBLIC OF CHINA, / HONG KONG WILL MAINTAIN
ITS ECONOMIC SYSTEM AND WAY OF LIFE FOR 50
YEARS AFTER THE FIRST OF JULY 1997.

2 IT GIVES HONG KONG A HIGH DEGREE OF AUTONOMY: /
HONG KONG PEOPLE WILL ADMINISTER HONG KONG /
AND THE SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION WILL
PASS ITS OWN LEGISLATION.

3

IT ALLOWS HONG KONG TO CONTINUE TO DECIDE ITS
OWN ECONOMIC, FINANCIAL AND TRADE POLICIES |
AND TO PARTICIPATE AS APPROPRIATE IN INTERNATIONAL
ORGANISATIONS AND AGREEMENTS.

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IT PRESERVES HONG KONG'S FAMILIAR LEGAL SYSTEM
AND THE RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS ENJOYED THERE.
IN SHORT | IT PROVIDES THE ASSURANCES FOR THE
FUTURE WHICH HONG KONG NEEDS, | IN ORDER TO
CONTINUE TO PLAY ITS UNIQUE ROLE IN THE WORLD
AS A TRADING AND FINANCIAL CENTRE.

THESE QUALITIES HAVE BEEN RECOGNISED IN THE AGREEMENT
BY THE BRITISH PARLIAMENT | AND BY THE STANDING
COMMITTEE OF THE NATIONAL PEOPLE'S CONGRESS
OF CHINA, WHICH HAVE

APPROVED THE INTENTION OF OUR GOVERNMENTS TO
PROCEED TO SIGNATURE.

THE AGREEMENT HAS BEEN SUBJECT TO A THOROUGH
PUBLIC DEBATE | AMONG THOSE WHOSE FUTURE IT
WILL DETERMINE - THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG.

ALTHOUGH THEY HAVE EXPRESSED SOME
RESERVATIONS AND SOUGHT CLARIFICATION ON
PARTICULAR POINTS, / THEY HAVE CLEARLY JUDGED
IT ACCEPTABLE TO THEM AS A WHOLE.

THE AGREEMENT HAS BEEN WIDELY PRAISED BY
OTHER GOVERNMENTS, IN INTERNATIONAL
ORGANISATIONS AND IN FINANCIAL AND ECONOMIC
CIRCLES.

THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS
HAS DESCRIBED IT AS AN EXAMPLE FOR OTHER

COUNTRIES / OF THE WAY IN WHICH DIFFICULT
INTERNATIONAL PROBLEMS CAN BE SUCCESSFULLY
RESOLVED. //

INTERNATIONAL GOODWILL AND SUPPORT WILL BE
VITAL FOR HONG KONG IN THE FUTURE, AND I HAVE
NO DOUBT THAT IT WILL BE FORTHCOMING.

I SHOULD LIKE TO PAY A TRIBUTE TO THE LEADERS OF CHINA
FOR THE VISION AND FARSIGHTEDNESS OF THEIR
APPROACH TO THE NEGOTIATIONS.

THE CONCEPT OF "ONE COUNTRY, TWO SYSTEMS" - /
PRESERVING TWO DIFFERENT POLITICAL, SOCIAL
AND ECONOMIC SYSTEMS WITHIN ONE NATION HAS NO
PRECEDENT.

IT OFFERS AN IMAGINATIVE RESPONSE TO THE

E R
SPECIAL HISTORICAL CIRCUMSTANCES OF HONG
KONG.

THE CONCEPT IS AN EXAMPLE OF HOW APPARENTLY
INTRACTABLE PROBLEMS CAN, AND SHOULD BE
RESOLVED.

THE AGREEMENT IS A BASIS ON WHICH THE PEOPLE OF HONG
KONG WILL BUILD.

THEY WILL BRING TO THE TASK (THE ENERGY,
PERSISTENCE AND DETERMINATION FOR WHICH THEY
ARE RIGHTLY FAMOUS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

I AM CONFIDENT THAT THEY WILL MAKE HONG KONG
AN EVEN MORE FLOURISHING PLACE THAN IT IS
TODAY.

BRITAIN AND CHINA SHARE A CONTINUING RESPONSIBILITY TO

MAINTAIN THE CONDITIONS WITHIN WHICH THE
PEOPLE OF HONG KONG CAN REALISE THIS GOAL.

WE HAVE LAID THE FOUNDATION / IN THIS SOLEMN
INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENT.

WE HAVE CREATED, IN THE SINO-BRITISH JOINT
LIAISON GROUP, / A FORUM FOR CO-OPERATION OVER
ITS IMPLEMENTATION.

WE HAVE DEMONSTRATED THE STRENGTH OF OUR
~~POLITICAL~~ COMMITMENT TO IT TODAY BY THE
SIGNATURES THAT YOU, MR. PREMIER, AND I HAVE
SET UPON IT.

I AM HEARTENED BY THE ASSURANCE WHICH YOUR
GOVERNMENT HAS REPEATEDLY GIVEN THAT THE
ARRANGEMENTS FOR HONG KONG CONTAINED IN THE

AGREEMENT ARE NOT MEASURES OF EXPEDIENCY.

THEY ARE LONG TERM POLICIES, WHICH WILL BE
INCORPORATED IN THE BASIC LAW FOR HONG KONG /
AND PRESERVED INTACT FOR 50 YEARS FROM 1997.

FOR MY PART | I PLEDGE | THAT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT WILL
DO ALL IN ITS POWER TO MAKE THE AGREEMENT A
SUCCESS.

IT WILL BE OUR PRIDE AND OUR PLEASURE TO
ADMINISTER HONG KONG UP TO 30 JUNE 1997 / IN
ACCORDANCE WITH THE HIGHEST PRINCIPLES OF
BRITISH ADMINISTRATION.

WE SHALL ADMINISTER IT PRUDENTLY WITH
FORESIGHT AND IN THE BEST ~~INTERESTS~~ ~~OF~~ ~~THE~~
PEOPLE.
~~PEOPLE~~

IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE TERMS OF THE AGREEMENT
WE SHALL BE READY TO CONSULT WITH THE CHINESE
GOVERNMENT / THROUGH THE JOINT LIAISON GROUP / TO
ENSURE A SMOOTH TRANSITION AND WE ARE PLEASED
THAT THIS CONSULTATION WILL EXTEND BEYOND
1997 TO THE YEAR 2000.

THE NEGOTIATION ITSELF / HAS BROUGHT OUR COUNTRIES CLOSER
TOGETHER.

IT HAS INCREASED OUR MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING,
RESPECT AND TRUST.

I AM CONVINCED THAT AS WE WORK TOGETHER IN
THE FUTURE WE SHALL BE LAYING THE FOUNDATION

FOR AN EVEN CLOSER AND DEEPER RELATIONSHIP.

THAT IS GOOD FOR BRITAIN; GOOD FOR CHINA;

AND GOOD FOR THE WORLD.

↙ IT IS ABOVE ALL GOOD FOR THE PEOPLE OF HONG
KONG.

WE ARE PRIVILEGED TODAY TO TAKE PART WITH OUR CHINESE

FRIENDS IN A UNIQUE OCCASION.

THE CIRCUMSTANCES ARE UNIQUE, THE AGREEMENT

IS UNIQUE.

IT IS RIGHT THAT WE SHOULD FEEL A SENSE OF

HISTORY, OF PRIDE AND OF CONFIDENCE IN THE

FUTURE.