

E. R.

PRIME MINISTER'S SPEECH TO THE

JOINT SESSION OF EXCO AND LEGCO

HONG KONG: 20 DECEMBER



FR  
Your Honorable members of the  
Executive and Legislative Councils.

THIS EVENING I SPEAK TO YOU ON A MOMENTOUS OCCASION.

YESTERDAY IN PEKING | PREMIER ZHAO ZIYANG AND I |  
SIGNED THE SINO-BRITISH JOINT DECLARATION ON  
HONG KONG.

IT IS FITTING THAT THIS HISTORIC DOCUMENT SHOULD HAVE

BEEN SIGNED BY TWO PRIME MINISTERS.

THOSE SIGNATURES TESTIFY TO THE TOTAL

COMMITMENT | AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF OUR TWO  
GOVERNMENTS | TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE  
AGREEMENT.

THOSE SIGNATURES WERE ALSO THE CULMINATION OF A PROCESS

WHICH BEGAN TWO YEARS AGO WHEN I VISITED  
PEKING AND HONG KONG.



DURING THOSE TWO YEARS WE HAVE CONDUCTED  
TAXING AND COMPLEX NEGOTIATIONS.

*I pay tribute to Sir Geoffrey Howe  
and his able team of advisers.*

THE AIM AGREED BETWEEN THE BRITISH AND CHINESE

GOVERNMENTS WAS TO PRESERVE HONG KONG'S

STABILITY AND PROSPERITY.

FOR US ON THE BRITISH SIDE | THIS HAD A VERY  
SPECIAL MEANING.

THROUGHOUT THE NEGOTIATIONS MY FIRST CONCERN WAS THE  
FUTURE WELL-BEING OF HONG KONG AND HER  
PEOPLE.

BRITAIN HAS BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR HONG KONG FOR NEARLY  
150 YEARS.



IT IS AN ASSOCIATION WHICH IS A SOURCE OF  
JUSTIFIABLE PRIDE TO US ALL.

AND BRITISH ADMINISTRATION HAS PROVIDED THE  
NECESSARY LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL FOUNDATION  
FOR WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED.

BUT HONG KONG'S GROWTH AND SUCCESS - ESPECIALLY IN THE  
POST-WAR YEARS, EVEN IN DIFFICULT TIMES -  
HAS BEEN DUE ABOVE ALL TO THE REMARKABLE  
TALENTS AND ENERGY OF THE PEOPLE WHO LIVE  
HERE.

THEIR CHARACTER, THEIR ACHIEVEMENT HAS BEEN  
SO STRIKING THAT OUR PRIME COMMITMENT COULD  
ONLY BE TO THEM.



WE WERE DETERMINED TO DO ALL WE COULD / TO PRESERVE WHAT  
by their own endeavours.  
THEY HAVE BUILT ~~ON WHAT WAS ONCE ONLY A~~  
~~BARREN ROCK.~~

WE SOUGHT A REALISTIC FRAMEWORK, ONE WHICH  
TOOK ACCOUNT OF CHINESE INTERESTS.

BUT AGAINST THAT BACKGROUND WE SOUGHT ARRANGEMENTS  
WHICH WOULD PROVIDE THE FULLEST POSSIBLE  
ASSURANCES THAT HONG KONG PEOPLE COULD  
CONTINUE TO DEVELOP THEIR TALENTS AND APPLY  
THEIR ENERGY: ( THAT WHAT I WOULD CALL HONG  
KONG'S GENIUS COULD CONTINUE TO FLOURISH / AND  
THAT IT COULD MAKE A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION  
TO THE DEVELOPMENT AND MODERNISATION OF CHINA  
AS A WHOLE.



I ~~FIRMLY~~ BELIEVE WE HAVE SECURED SUCH ARRANGEMENTS / AND  
THAT THE AGREEMENT IS A GOOD ONE.

IT PROVIDES IN CONSIDERABLE DETAIL AND IN BINDING FORM  
FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE  
ESSENTIAL TO YOUR UNIQUE SOCIETY.

AS A RESULT, THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG CAN, I BELIEVE,  
FACE THE FUTURE WITH CONFIDENCE.

THE ASSESSMENT HAS SHOWN THAT THEY REGARD THE AGREEMENT  
AS A WHOLE AS ACCEPTABLE.

THE PROCESS OF ASSESSMENT WAS REAL AND IT IS  
IMPORTANT.



PARLIAMENT WOULD HAVE EXPECTED NO LESS / BEFORE  
APPROVING THE INTENTION OF THE GOVERNMENT TO  
SIGN THE AGREEMENT.

I WELCOME THE FACT / THAT THE ASSESSMENT OFFICE REPORT  
HAS GIVEN A CLEAR ACCOUNT OF THE RESERVATIONS  
AND CONCERNS WHICH PEOPLE QUITE  
UNDERSTANDABLY FEEL ON INDIVIDUAL POINTS.  
THIS WILL BE OF GREAT VALUE TO US WHEN WE  
BEGIN THE TASK OF PUTTING THE AGREEMENT INTO  
EFFECT.

THE SUCCESS OF ANY INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENT / OF COURSE  
DEPENDS ON THE GOOD FAITH AND COMMITMENT OF  
THE SIGNATORIES.



I BRING TO YOU THE STRONGEST POSSIBLE COMMITMENT ON THE  
PART OF HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT.

WE SHALL DO OUR UTMOST TO ENSURE THAT THE AGREEMENT  
WORKS.

AND I BRING FROM MY TALKS IN PEKING WITH THE MOST SENIOR  
CHINESE LEADERS A SIMILAR COMMITMENT.

THEY ASSURED ME FOR THEIR PART / THAT THE AGREEMENT  
WOULD BE FAITHFULLY IMPLEMENTED.

INDEED PREMIER ZHAO ZIYANG ASSURED ME YESTERDAY  
IN PEKING THAT IT WAS THE TRADITION OF THE CHINESE  
NATION TO ACT IN GOOD FAITH, TO LIVE UP TO ITS  
INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS AND THAT CHINA WOULD PROVE  
ITS WORDS WITH DEEDS.

CHAIRMAN DENG XIAOPING CONFIRMED THIS. //

OF COURSE YOU STILL HAVE YOUR CONCERNS.

I UNDERSTAND THEM.



ON NATIONALITY QUESTIONS FOR INSTANCE.

BUT WE HAVE FOUND A WAY TO ALLOW ALL HONG KONG  
 BRITISH DEPENDENT TERRITORIES CITIZENS / BORN  
 BEFORE 1 JULY 1997 / TO CONTINUE TO TRAVEL ON  
 BRITISH PASSPORTS AND TO ENJOY BRITISH  
 CONSULAR PROTECTION IN THIRD COUNTRIES.

I KNOW YOU ARE ANXIOUS THAT OTHER COUNTRIES MAY NOT ACCEPT  
 THE NEW BRITISH PASSPORTS AFTER 1997.

THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT REGARDS IT AS PART OF  
 ITS CONTINUING RESPONSIBILITY FOR HONG KONG  
 TO ~~EXPLAIN~~ EXPLAIN TO ALL THE COUNTRIES CONCERNED / THAT  
 THERE WILL BE NO JUSTIFICATION <sup>for</sup> ~~to~~ <sup>us</sup> IMPOSE NEW  
 RESTRICTIONS ON THE FREEDOM OF ENTRY OF HONG  
 KONG PEOPLE HOLDING THE NEW FORM OF PASSPORT.



I BELIEVE WE SHALL RECEIVE THE NECESSARY CO-OPERATION:

I AM VERY STRUCK BY THE WARM INTERNATIONAL  
RECEPTION WHICH HAS BEEN GIVEN TO THIS  
AGREEMENT.

ANOTHER CONCERN IS THE BASIC LAW.

I FULLY AGREE ABOUT ITS IMPORTANCE.

THE TERMS OF THE AGREEMENT STIPULATE THAT THE  
VERY FULL AND DETAILED PROVISIONS IN THE  
JOINT DECLARATION AND ITS FIRST ANNEX WILL BE  
EMBODIED IN THE BASIC LAW.

MY DISCUSSIONS IN PEKING HAVE CONFIRMED THAT THE

CHINESE GOVERNMENT ARE FULLY AWARE OF THE



IMPORTANCE OF THE BASIC LAW, AND OF THE  
CONCERN IN HONG KONG THAT PEOPLE HERE SHOULD  
BE CONSULTED ABOUT IT.

PREMIER ZHAO ZIYANG TOLD ME THAT IN THE DRAFTING OF THE BASIC  
LAW, THE VIEWS OF THE HONG KONG PEOPLE WOULD BE  
SOLICITED ON A WIDE BASIS, AND THAT THE BASIC LAW  
WOULD BE DRAFTED AND PROMULGATED NOT LATER THAN 1990.

UNTIL 1997 BRITAIN REMAINS FULLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE  
ADMINISTRATION OF HONG KONG.



*feel as we*  
WE HAVE ALWAYS FELT A DEEP COMMITMENT TO THE PEOPLE OF  
THE TERRITORY.

NOW THAT THE AGREEMENT IS SIGNED, I PLEDGE  
HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT'S EARNEST EFFORTS IN  
THE YEARS TO 1997 TO ENSURE THAT HONG KONG  
CONTINUES TO HAVE A STABLE AND RESPONSIVE  
GOVERNMENT, ADMINISTERING THE TERRITORY IN  
ACCORDANCE WITH THE INTERESTS AND WISHES OF  
ITS PEOPLE.

DURING THAT TIME YOU WILL WANT AND NEED MOVEMENT  
TOWARDS MORE REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT.  
HONG KONG PEOPLE MUST BE ABLE TO ASSUME  
RESPONSIBILITY FOR RUNNING THEIR OWN AFFAIRS  
WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE AGREEMENT.



E. R.

AT THE SAME TIME WE MUST AVOID SUDDEN AND  
DRAMATIC CHANGES WHICH MIGHT HAVE A  
DISTURBING EFFECT.

WE NEED TO BUILD, BUT TO BUILD CAREFULLY AND  
SECURELY. //

HONG KONG, MORE THAN MOST PLACES, LOOKS OUTWARDS FOR  
ITS LIVELIHOOD.

IT FINDS READY MARKETS IN THE DEVELOPED  
WORLD.

IT IS NATURAL THAT TRADERS AND INVESTORS  
SHOULD HAVE WATCHED CAREFULLY THE  
NEGOTIATIONS AND THEIR OUTCOME.

THEY WANTED TO BE ASSURED THAT THEIR  
INVESTMENTS WOULD BE PROTECTED,



THEIR SOURCES OF SUPPLY WOULD REMAIN  
RELIABLE, AND THEIR FREEDOM TO MOVE FUNDS  
FREELY IN AND OUT | WOULD REMAIN UNTRAMMELLED.

ALL THESE HAVE BEEN TAKEN CARE OF IN THE AGREEMENT.

INDEED, THE GOVERNMENTS OF HONG KONG'S MAJOR  
TRADING PARTNERS HAVE ALREADY WELCOMED THE  
AGREEMENT - FOR EXAMPLE THE UNITED STATES,  
THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY, JAPAN, CANADA  
AND AUSTRALIA, - AND HAVE IN MANY CASES  
PLEGGED THEMSELVES TO HELP IN ITS  
IMPLEMENTATION.

THE AGREEMENT PRESERVES THE ESSENTIALS FOR HONG KONG'S  
INTERNATIONAL AND ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIPS.



- HONG KONG'S FREEDOM TO PURSUE ITS OWN  
ECONOMIC POLICIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH ITS  
OWN NEEDS;
  
- THE FREE ENTERPRISE SYSTEM, FREE TRADE  
POLICIES AND THE FREE PORT;
  
- HONG KONG'S ABILITY TO RETAIN ITS  
SEPARATE POSITION WITHIN THE GATT AND  
OTHER MULTILATERAL TRADE ARRANGEMENTS:  
AND ITS FREEDOM TO DEVELOP ITS OWN  
ECONOMIC AND TRADE RELATIONS WITH ALL  
STATES AND REGIONS;



- A FREELY CONVERTIBLE CURRENCY;
  
- FREEDOM TO PURSUE PRUDENT BUDGETARY POLICIES DETERMINED BY HONG KONG IN ACCORDANCE WITH HONG KONG'S OWN NEEDS;
  
- THE RIGHT OF COMPANIES AND INDIVIDUALS TO OWN AND DISPOSE OF PROPERTY: AND THE PROTECTION OF THESE RIGHTS IN LAW;

*And above all*

- ( INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS ~~ESPECIALLY~~ *which are the essence of* ~~FREEDOM OF CHOICE OF OCCUPATION.~~ *your way of life.*

I CAN ASSURE HONG KONG'S PARTNERS AROUND THE WORLD THAT

THE FREE AND DYNAMIC BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT



WHICH HAS ATTRACTED THEM IN SUCH LARGE  
NUMBERS / FOR SO MANY YEARS / WILL CONTINUE TO  
FLOURISH.

HONG KONG IS A GOING CONCERN WITH A FUTURE  
STRETCHING INTO THE NEXT CENTURY AND BEYOND. //

WE COULD NOT HAVE ACHIEVED SUCH A GOOD AGREEMENT  
WITHOUT THE SUPPORT AND ADVICE OF MANY PEOPLE  
IN HONG KONG, AND SPEAKING HERE TONIGHT AMONG  
SO MANY OLD FRIENDS, I SHOULD LIKE TO EXPRESS  
MY THANKS.

I SHOULD LIKE TO PAY TRIBUTE TO THE GOVERNOR FOR THE  
FIRMNESS OF HIS LEADERSHIP AND THE WISDOM OF  
HIS ADVICE.



THE MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE COUNCILS

*under the distinguished guidance of*  
*have* PLAYED A CRUCIAL ROLE THROUGHOUT THIS

*Sui S-y*  
*Chung*

DIFFICULT PERIOD IN HONG KONG'S HISTORY.

THE ADVICE OFFERED BY EXCO THROUGHOUT THE  
 NEGOTIATING PROCESS WAS OF THE GREATEST  
 VALUE.

I CAN RECALL MANY OCCASIONS OVER THE PAST TWO  
 YEARS IN THE CABINET ROOM AT 10 DOWNING  
 STREET WHEN WE DISCUSSED *together* THE CRUCIAL ISSUES. ↓

ALL MEMBERS OF UMELCO MADE KNOWN THEIR OWN HOPES AND  
 FEARS | AND THOSE OF THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG | AS  
 REFLECTED TO THEM.

YOUR FRANKNESS, DETERMINATION AND SENSE OF



PUBLIC DUTY WAS OF GREAT VALUE IN THE  
NEGOTIATIONS.

I SHOULD ALSO LIKE TO PAY WARM TRIBUTE TO THE EXEMPLARY  
MANNER IN WHICH THE HONG KONG PUBLIC SERVICE  
CONTINUED TO PERFORM ITS DUTIES, AND <sup>TO</sup> THE  
<sub>L</sub> PATIENCE AND FOREBEARANCE OF THE PEOPLE OF  
HONG KONG AS A WHOLE.

IT CANNOT HAVE BEEN EASY TO LIVE WITH THE  
KNOWLEDGE THAT THE WHOLE FUTURE OF THE  
TERRITORY AND ITS PEOPLE WAS BEING DISCUSSED,  
AS IT HAD TO BE, IN CONDITIONS OF  
CONFIDENTIALITY.

*We felt deeply the responsibilities of the  
trust they placed in us*

ONE TASK HAS BEEN COMPLETED WITH THE SIGNING OF THE



JOINT DECLARATION.

BUT THIS IS NOT THE END.

THE AGREEMENT ON ITS OWN CANNOT ENSURE A SUCCESSFUL  
FUTURE FOR HONG KONG.

SO MUCH LIES, AS IT ALWAYS HAS DONE, IN YOUR  
HANDS.

YOU, THE HONG KONG PEOPLE, HAVE EARNED THE RESPECT OF  
THE ENTIRE WORLD FOR THE ASTONISHING SUCCESS  
STORY WHICH YOU HAVE WRITTEN.  
YOU HAVE CONTRIBUTED RESILIENCE, IMAGINATION  
AND SHEER HARD WORK.  
ABOVE ALL YOU HAVE SHOWN THE COURAGE TO ADAPT  
TO CHANGING CIRCUMSTANCES.

*We Love →*



1997 IS PERHAPS THE GREATEST CHALLENGE YOU HAVE YET

~~We have over 12 years to prepare for~~

FACED: I BELIEVE YOU WILL RISE TO THAT

~~to gether~~  
When it comes

CHALLENGE AND THAT THE SPIRIT, THE ENTERPRISE

AND THE PROSPERITY OF HONG KONG WILL FLOURISH

will  
AND ENDURE.

End

We have over 12 years to  
prepare together for the changes  
which lie ahead,