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SECRET

Prime Minute.



Agree that the Working Paper at Annex
A should be put to the Chinese?

PM/84/21

A.S.C. 20/7

PRIME MINISTER

Yes not

Future of Hong Kong: Defence, Security and Public Order

1. As we approach the more central issues in our discussions on Hong Kong with the Chinese we need to prepare our position carefully on this key area. As with other subjects we should aim to do this through a Working Paper to be presented to the Chinese as soon as possible after the forthcoming round of talks on 25/26 January.

2. From what we know of the Chinese attitude so far to the situation after 1997, national defence would be the responsibility of the Central Chinese Government but the Special Administrative Region of Hong Kong would assume the responsibility for keeping social order in the region. There have been some worrying indications, though the Chinese may not have been explicit about this, that they might wish to station some of their forces in the SAR. The attached paper, which I mentioned in my minute FCS/83/267 of 15 December, has been prepared jointly by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Ministry of Defence, and takes account of points made by the Governor of Hong Kong and our Embassy in Peking. It argues strongly that we should aim for Chinese agreement not to station their own troops in the SAR but to accept the creation of an indigenous internal security force within the SAR to support the police in maintaining public order. The aim would be for this force to be effective by 1997, thus enabling the British garrison to be withdrawn.

3. Attached to the paper is a draft Working Paper for presentation to the Chinese, together with points to be made when handing it over.

4. The draft Working Paper takes account of points made in general discussion with Unofficial members of the Executive Council during their visit to London from 13-17 January. It will however



need to be put to them formally for comments in the normal way before it is presented to the Chinese.

5. The Defence Secretary and I have considered these papers and their implications. We realise that it may not be easy to dissuade the Chinese from having some PLA presence in Hong Kong, perhaps in the form of a liaison office, but we nevertheless take the view that the permanent stationing of PLA troops in the SAR should be opposed, for the reasons given in the papers.

6. If you agree, we should like to present the Working Paper to the Chinese at the earliest opportunity with a view to holding discussions with them on this matter soon. This would of course be on the usual conditional basis.

7. I am copying this minute to other members of OD(K).

GEOFFREY HOWE

Foreign and Commonwealth Office
30 January, 1984

JOINT FCO/MOD PAPER ON THE FUTURE OF HONG KONG: DEFENCE, SECURITY AND PUBLIC ORDER

BACKGROUND

1. Our present aim in the talks with the PRC is to discover whether effective guarantees for Hong Kong's autonomy can be agreed, on the basis that sovereignty and the right of administration would be assumed by China in 1997, (without prejudice to any final agreement on our position on sovereignty in the meanwhile).
2. HMG have responsibility for the defence and internal security of Hong Kong. There is a British garrison in Hong Kong totalling nearly 10,000 (24% UK, 60% Gurkha and 16% Hong Kong Chinese.) These last mainly in the Hong Kong Military Service Corps. In addition, the Royal Hong Kong Regiment (the Volunteers) and the Royal Hong Kong Auxiliary Air Force come under the Commander British Forces' command when called out.
3. The primary role of the garrison at present is internal security in support of the civil power. British forces have not had to be deployed for this purpose in recent years, but if a serious internal security situation developed the police would only be able to cope for a limited period and would thus require assistance. Recently the prevention of illegal immigration from China has been one of the garrison's major operational activities.
4. An agreement with China is likely to involve the establishment of a Special Administrative Region (SAR) of Hong Kong under Article 31 of the constitution of the PRC. We would aim to negotiate as much autonomy and insulation for the SAR as possible, even though Hong Kong would become constitutionally a part of China.
5. At the December round of talks the Chinese side made plain their view that autonomy did not include responsibility for defence or foreign affairs, which would rest with Peking. They also strongly implied that they would wish to station troops in the SAR. They added however that responsibility for maintaining 'social

order' would rest with the SAR Government.

ARGUMENT

6. Peking might well argue that the stationing of some Chinese forces in Hong Kong - if only for the purposes of communications, early warning and general deterrence - was necessary for national and regional defence. Their negotiators have said that such troops would not interfere in the SAR's internal affairs (and would be maintained at Peking's expense). In the margins of the talks they have sought to play down the importance of the proposed presence by describing it as 'symbolic'. But a permanently-stationed unit of PLA forces in the SAR would do very serious damage to confidence in Hong Kong and raise serious doubts in the minds of the Hong Kong people about Chinese intentions.

7. In trying to change Chinese minds on this point we need to:

(a) Exploit the openings provided by the proposal that the SAR should be responsible for social order: and the statement that there will be no interference in its internal affairs:

(b) Convince the Chinese that the stationing of PLA forces (including warships) in the SAR will damage confidence and be against the interests of all parties.

(c) Convince the Chinese that a permanent military presence is unnecessary given the unlikelihood of external threat and the speed with which PLA forces could be moved into the SAR in that circumstance.

Our aim should be to persuade them of both the advisability and practicability of the SAR maintaining its own internal security force on a scale adequate to handle all situations short of external attack, and thus give the Chinese no excuse for intervention in internal affairs. If we fail to get agreement that there should be no PLA presence at all in the SAR, we should have ready a tolerable fall-back position.

POSSIBLE FORM OF INTERNAL SECURITY FORCE

8. There would be no prospect of securing Chinese agreement if we sought to pass off any form of British garrison as part of the SAR's own internal security force. Any suggestion that a security force might be recruited externally (from Gurkhas or elsewhere) is likely to be almost as unacceptable to the Chinese. The remaining options would be:

- (a) To strengthen the existing police force, perhaps by adding a permanent paramilitary wing:
- (b) To form an indigenous local security force based on the existing Hong Kong Military Service Corps (HKGSC) and perhaps incorporating elements of the existing Hong Kong Regiment and the Auxiliary Air Force.

(a) is almost certainly not enough on its own; police confidence to handle internal security problems has always depended on the assurance that, if things got out of hand, there is a separate, well-trained internal security force to fall back on. Since it is very doubtful whether even the addition of a permanent paramilitary wing would give the police this essential source of independent support, (b) would be needed too.

9. However these methods are combined, it will be difficult in the time available to recruit and train the leadership for a local force: There will be a number of other agencies competing for similar talent, and some local citizens, including existing part-time members of the Hong Kong Regiment and the Auxiliary Air Force, may be reluctant to commit themselves for fear of compromising their future and that of their families. The police will face problems over local recruitment and retention in an increasingly localised force. However, if the total package negotiated is generally acceptable to the people of Hong Kong, it should be possible to make satisfactory arrangements in the time available. If agreement can be reached with the Chinese on the setting up of an internal security force this might be coupled with an early public statement that no PLA forces, (including warships)

would be stationed in the SAR.

POSSIBLE UK CONTRIBUTION

10. If we are successful in securing agreement to an internal security force the Chinese might agree to a British advisory and training role continuing beyond 1997 in the interests of stability for the SAR. This might include:

- (i) providing personnel (officers and/or other ranks) as members of or advisers to the local security force;
- (ii) providing training assistance;
- (iii) continuing to provide personnel for the police force in the middle and senior ranks.

In cases (i) and (iii) the personnel would have to be employed directly by the local SAR Government. There might however be scope under (ii) for continuing provision of loan service personnel, provided the Chinese could be satisfied that their function was essentially to train rather than control.

POSSIBLE FALL BACK

11. If the Chinese insist on some permanent PLA presence, we should argue for:

- (a) An internal security force with PLA presence restricted to a PLA liaison office, if necessary with periodic visits by warships.

If this is unacceptable to the Chinese we should argue for:

- (b) An internal security force, with a limited mainland presence, located well away from the urban area, strictly for purposes of national defence. This might include external communications and early warning facilities.

As a last resort, if agreement is not reached on the setting up of

an internal security force, we might have to accept:

(c) A limited PLA presence, well away from the urban area, with a strengthened police force.

BRITISH GARRISON

12. In order to have credible arrangements ready by 1997 we should need to start setting up a local force as soon as agreement is reached with the Chinese. Depending on progress we could decide on possible phased reductions of the existing British garrison, with handover to a local security force completed not later than 30 June 1997. This could well be aided if agreement with the Chinese reduced the risk of Peking-inspired disorder, although if the agreement hit confidence there could be substantial spontaneous unrest, which might continue for a prolonged period. While HMG clearly cannot abdicate their responsibilities there may on the other hand be advantages in our negotiators indicating at some stage the possibility of a phased reduction in order to influence the Chinese to a helpful stance.

ANNEX A

DRAFT WORKING PAPER TO BE PRESENTED TO THE CHINESE: DEFENCE,
SECURITY AND PUBLIC ORDER

CHINESE PROPOSALS

1. There would be a high degree of autonomy for the SAR, but national defence would be the responsibility of the central Government. Any armed forces stationed in the SAR would not interfere with the internal affairs of the region; their military expenses would be borne by the central Government. The SAR would assume the responsibility of keeping social order in the region.

IMPLICATIONS

2. To discharge its obligations for 'social order' without seeking assistance from the central Government, the SAR would not be able to rely on its police force alone and would need in addition an internal security force. The police would be responsible for the maintenance of law and order, but their resources would not be equal to dealing with any major disturbance, or controlling effectively any illegal movement of persons into the SAR. The local internal security force would be available at all times to assist the police in these and other respects. Its role would enable it to be smaller than the present garrison. It would be locally raised and made effective by 1997.

3. British Forces, which for reasons of time and distance have had to be stationed in Hong Kong, would thus be withdrawn. The Chinese Government, for whom these considerations would not apply, could make clear that their forces would not be stationed in the SAR in normal circumstances. This would help to ensure that the SAR enjoyed a high degree of autonomy.

ANNEX B

POINTS TO BE MADE TO THE CHINESE WHEN PRESENTING THE WORKING PAPERS ON DEFENCE, SECURITY AND PUBLIC ORDER

1. While we do not dispute the right of the Chinese Government to station its forces in any part of China, the presence of PLA forces in the SAR could give the impression that Hong Kong was to be under some force of occupation: Even a token force would imply that the SAR enjoyed its high degree of autonomy on sufferance only.
2. On the other hand, the creation of a local, internal security force to support the police, together with a statement to the effect that mainland forces will not be stationed in the SAR, would confirm the intention to leave unchanged Hong Kong's present social and economic systems and lifestyle.
3. Such a system would equate roughly to the first two tiers of the Chinese three-tier system of police, armed police and army.
4. We have assumed that when the Chinese speak of 'social order' this encompasses all police and security functions other than external defence.
5. The considerations of time and distance which have caused British forces to have to be stationed in Hong Kong would not apply to the central Government in meeting its obligations for national defence.
6. During his visits to the US and Canada in January 1984 Premier Zhao repeated publicly a point made by Ye Jianying in September 1981 to the effect that under China's SAR plan for Taiwan no PLA forces would be stationed there. We see advantage, from the point of view of confidence, in this point being applied to Hong Kong.



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30 JAN 1984