



Prime Minister.

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Agree that our EC partners London SW1A 2AH
 should be briefed as proposed on page 2?

10 February 1984

A.S.C. 10/2

Dear John

Yes MG

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Future of Hong Kong: Briefing our European Community Partners

In your letter of 13 September 1983 you summed up the Prime Minister's views on the briefing of our allies on the Hong Kong negotiations. In short these were that the Australians, New Zealanders and Canadians should be kept generally up-to-date on progress in the negotiations, while we should provide the Americans with material in a little more detail.

Sir Geoffrey Howe has been considering whether there would now be advantage in beginning to brief our Community's partners more fully than hitherto on Hong Kong's future (briefings so far have been bland and defensive). He has in mind the following considerations:

- (i) if an agreement is eventually concluded with China over Hong Kong's future we shall be seeking the help of our Community partners. We shall be looking to them and other allies, in their diplomatic contacts with the Chinese Government, to urge conscientious implementation of an agreement over Hong Kong and respect of Hong Kong's autonomy after 1997;
- (ii) more specifically we shall be seeking the agreement of our Community partners that the Hong Kong SAR should receive favourable treatment within the GATT, and should continue to benefit from the Community's GSP Scheme after 1997. We hope too that they will join us in putting the Chinese on notice that continuation of that treatment is linked to the degree of effective autonomy which Hong Kong would continue to enjoy. This is an important way in which we can seek to secure Chinese respect of the agreement.
- (iii) in both the above contexts we shall be better able to seek the co-operation of our allies if they feel that we have taken them into our confidence earlier in the exercise, and not just when help is needed;
- (iv) we are committed to discuss with our European partners important foreign policy questions of concern to the Ten.

/Sir Geoffrey



Sir Geoffrey Howe has concluded that these considerations make it desirable for us to begin briefing our Community partners, informally and in conditions of strict confidentiality. In the first instance, it would not be our intention to brief them in detail or to seek practical or specific measures of co-operation. It would rather be a matter of introducing them to the background of the Hong Kong negotiations so they could take a generally helpful line in their contacts with the Chinese. Nearer the conclusion of an agreement there might be more specific points which we wanted our partners to put across.

Where the format of a briefing is concerned, Sir Geoffrey feels that the requirements of confidentiality and informality would best be met if the Political Director were to speak to his colleagues in the margins of one of the monthly meetings of the Political Committee of the Ten. The next such meeting is on 21/22 February. Sir J Bullard would of course emphasise the extreme sensitivity of the information that he was passing on to them, although in practice he would not go much beyond what has appeared in scattered form in the press.

Briefing at Ministerial level would best be left to a later stage, together with any request for action by our partners in support of our position.

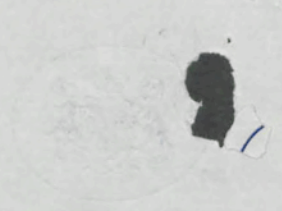
I should be grateful if you could let me know the Prime Minister's reaction to these proposals.

Y ever,
Peter Ricketts

(P F Ricketts)
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

13 February, 1984

FUTURE OF HONG KONG: BRIEFING OUR EUROPEAN
COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Thank you for your letter of 10 February.

The Prime Minister agrees that our European Community partners may be briefed about the future of Hong Kong along the lines suggested in your letter.

A. J. COLES

P.F. Ricketts, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

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