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QUEEN ANNE'S GATE LONDON SW1H 9AT

16 March 1984

N.S.P.A.

A.S.C. 16/3

Dear Geoffrey,

FUTURE OF HONG KONG: WORKING PAPER ON NATIONALITY ETC

You sent me a copy of your minute of 9 March to the Prime Minister enclosing a final draft of the working paper on these subjects. It is especially important that our proposals raise no new expectations of immigration commitments so far as the United Kingdom is concerned and I was grateful to you for emphasising in paragraph 4 of your minute two of the aspects of the proposals that are vital from this point of view. As my Private Secretary has already confirmed to yours I have no further comments on the text of the working paper.

I was, however, concerned to see the reference in the last sentence of paragraph 7 of your minute ~~about~~ the possibility of making provision later for those who might be in actual danger in 1997. I could not accept any new separate, legislative provision, or any assumption of actual provision for settlement here, beyond that for discretionary registration for crown servants and some others as British citizens contained in section 4(5) of the British Nationality Act 1981. Home Office and Foreign Office Ministers are on public record in explaining that the criteria for the exercise of discretion under section 4(5) would be tight, and that it would be exercised sparingly. Any hint of an approach that might be more generous could raise false expectations.

/We shall

The Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey Howe, QC, MP

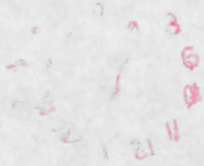
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We shall need to ensure that our two Departments keep in very close touch on all these matters.

I am sending a copy of this letter to the Prime Minister, to other members of OD(K) and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yours,
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