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cc/PC



Prime Minister

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Contact with the approval

London SW1A 2AH

and to receive Sir S. Y. Chung?

16 March, 1984

A.J.C. 16/11

Dear John,

Yes

Future of Hong Kong: Visit by the Secretary of State to Hong Kong and China

As you know we have put to the Chinese Government the proposal that the Foreign Secretary might visit Peking in the week of 15 April, travelling on to Hong Kong. We await the Chinese response. In the meantime EXCO have suggested that Sir Geoffrey Howe should visit Hong Kong before he goes to Peking in order to get a direct picture of views in the territory.

Sir Geoffrey Howe considers that it would be wrong for him to visit Hong Kong before and after a visit to Peking. Overt consultation with Hong Kong before going to Peking would certainly be strongly criticised by the Chinese and could well jeopardise the Foreign Secretary's important and delicate negotiations in Peking. Sir Geoffrey is however ready to agree to the alternative proposal that a small group of Unofficial members of EXCO and LEGO might visit London in advance of his departure for Peking, in order to brief him on opinion in Hong Kong.

I enclose a text of a draft telegram which, provided that the Prime Minister sees no objection, we propose to send to Hong Kong. We assume that any delegation from Hong Kong will be led by Sir S Y Chung. The telegram suggests a private talk between Sir Geoffrey Howe and Sir S Y and also raises the possibility of a private call by Sir S Y Chung on the Prime Minister. We believe that such calls would help to reassure Sir S Y Chung that the views of Hong Kong were being adequately taken into account at this crucial stage in the negotiations.

Sir Geoffrey Howe therefore hopes that the Prime Minister could agree in principle (subject to diary considerations) to receive Sir S Y Chung.

Yours ever,
Peter Ricketts

(P F Ricketts)
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street

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OUT TELEGRAM

	Classification and Caveats SECRET	Precedence/Deskby IMMEDIATE
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GRS	2	GRS
CLASS	3	SECRET
CAVEATS	4	
DESKBY	5	
FM FCO	6	FM FCO 141350Z MARCH 84
PRE/ADD	7	TO IMMEDIATE HONG KONG
TEL NO	8	TELEGRAM NUMBER
	9	INFO IMMEDIATE PEKING
	10	YOUR TELNO 675 AND PEKING TELNO 438: VISITS TO HONG KONG AND CHINA
	11	1. I have now been able to consider the views expressed by the
	12	Unofficials. I see no alternative to maintaining my planned
	13	itinerary and visiting Peking before Hong Kong. I believe it
	14	would be unwise, given Chinese sensitivities and suspicions, for
x	15	me to visit or even call at Hong Kong both before and after going
	16	to Peking. Even the brief stopover suggested in para 2 of Peking
	17	TUR would in my view carry risks which we should not take. If I
	18	am to make a that my statement in Hong Kong, which is intended to
	19	lift the veil on the future, this should be clearly preceded by
	20	discussions in Peking.
	21	2. In these circumstances I think the best alternative would be
///	22	for selected UMELCO members to <u>come to London</u> before my departure
//	23	for Peking. My own view is that the group should not be too
/	24	large, say six persons, but should include Unofficials from both
	25	EXCO and LEGCO, including perhaps a member of LEGCO who is an

NNNN ends telegram	BLANK	Catchword elected
File number	Dept HKD	Distribution Future of Hong Kong
Drafted by (Block capitals) R D CLIFT		
Telephone number 233 3184		
Authorised for despatch		
Comcen reference	Time of despatch	

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2 elected member of URBCO or a district board. We clearly need to
3 handle even that compromise carefully, in order to avoid
4 accusations in Peking that we are promoting the quote
5 three-legged stool unquote. But we must meet Hong Kong's wish to
6 present their view to me before the visit. I should be grateful
7 for your views and those of the Ambassador on this point. ^{Clare sure} ~~It~~
8 would be useful if you could accompany the group. ~~[and play your~~
9 ~~usual skilful role in their own internal deliberations.]~~

omit

x 10 3. The principal object of the visit, which would follow the
11 precedent of the visit by a similar mixed group to London in
12 September 1982, would be for Ministers to receive from them a
13 first hand account of Hong Kong opinion before my departure for
14 the Far East. It would thus be different in kind from the
15 continuing series of more detailed consultations with EXCO as a
16 whole. In these circumstances I think that the meeting with
17 myself (and probably also a separate meeting with Mr Luce) could
18 best involve all members of the delegation. Any more sensitive
19 points might be dealt with by Sir Y Chung (whom I assume would
20 lead the delegation) when I saw him for a private talk. (Subject
21 to the Prime Minister's availability he might also call at Number
22 10 Downing Street.)

23 4. Provided you and the Ambassador see no objection, I should be
24 grateful if you would put this proposal to EXCO. You should
25 explain that I would welcome this opportunity to clear an account
26 of Hong Kong opinion before I set off for Peking but in my view a
27 visit to Hong Kong before I went to Peking could seriously
28 compromise the success of the Peking discussions and hence of our
29 negotiating strategy as a whole.

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30 5. On the timing of a visit, a final decision should presumably
31 await the fixing of the twelfth round. But at the moment it
32 looks from here that a pair of days between 4 and 6 April would
33 be best. I hope that this would suit Unofficials, given that S Y
34 Chung and S L Chen have called off their plans to come to London

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OUT TELEGRAM (CONT)

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2 in the next week.
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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

19 March 1984

Future of Hong Kong:
Visit by the Foreign and Commonwealth
Secretary to Hong Kong and China

Thank you for your letter of 16 March.

The Prime Minister has noted Sir Geoffrey Howe's plans for his visit to Hong Kong and China. She agrees that the telegram enclosed with your letter should be despatched.

Mrs. Thatcher has also said that if Sir S Y Chung leads a small group of Unofficial members of EXCO and LEGCO to London in advance of Sir Geoffrey Howe's visit, she will be prepared to receive Sir S Y Chung.

Peter Ricketts, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

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