

CONFIDENTIAL



FILE

cc: Ingham

207

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

21 May, 1984

HONG KONG

I have seen Hong Kong telegram number 1383 which attributes to a No.10 spokesman various statements about the Prime Minister's travel plans in the autumn.

I have discussed this with Bernard Ingham. No more has been said by our Press Department than that the Prime Minister is planning a trip to the Far East this autumn, the itinerary has yet to be fixed, Malaysia is one of the countries under consideration and the likely date for the trip is September.

I suggest that if you or our posts are questioned about the report in the South China Morning Post they refuse to be drawn further. It should be sufficient to say that, Malaysia apart, no plans have been made nor would we expect to announce any until much later in the year.

A. J. COLES

P. Ricketts, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

CONFIDENTIAL

PS
PS/PUS
PS/MR LUCE
MR WILSON
HD/HKD
HD/FED
PS LADY YOUNG
SIR W HARDING
RESIDENT CLERK

COPIES TO:
MR COLES, NO.10 DOWNING ST
MR ROBERTS, NEWS DEPT
SIR PERCY CRADOCK

ADVANCE COPY

IMMEDIATE

GRS 200
CONFIDENTIAL
DESKBY 210800Z
FM HONG KONG 210405Z MAY 84
TO IMMEDIATE F C O
TELEGRAM NUMBER 1383 OF 21 MAY
INFO IMMEDIATE PEKING

FUTURE OF HONG KONG; POSSIBLE FAR EAST TOUR BY PRIME MINISTER.

1. THE SOUTH CHINA MORNING POST CARRIES ON ITS FRONT PAGE TODAY AN ARTICLE BY JILL HARTLEY DATED LONDON REPORTING THAT THE PRIME MINISTER IS PLANNING A TRIP TO THE FAR EAST THIS AUTUMN. THE ARTICLE SAYS THAT "DOWNING STREET IS ALREADY DRAWING UP THE SCHEDULE FOR A MAJOR TOUR A SPOKESMAN TOLD THE SOUTH CHINA MORNING POST THAT THE ITINERARY HAS YET TO BE FIXED AND THINGS ARE STILL IN THE EARLY PLANNING STAGES. BUT MRS THATCHER HAS EXPRESSED AN INTEREST IN VISITING PLACES IN THE EAST SHE HAS NOT BEEN TO BEFORE AS PRIME MINISTER. THOSE UNDER CONSIDERATION INCLUDE MALAYSIA, THE PHILIPPINES AND SOUTH KOREA..... NO 10 SAYS HONG KONG IS NOT, AT THIS STAGE, ON THE LIST, BUT IT IS NOT RULING IT OUT AS A POSSIBILITY". THE ARTICLE ADDS THAT THE LIKELY DATE FOR THE TRIP IS SOME TIME IN SEPTEMBER.

2. GRATEFUL FOR ANY BACKGROUND, AND TO KNOW WHAT LINE YOU WOULD WISH US TO TAKE IN RESPONSE TO PRESS QUERIES.

HADDON-CAVE

NNNN

Mr. [unclear]
Do you know who said all this, much of which would have been better not said?

A.J.C. $\frac{21}{5}$

N. Cross

Please see bits underlined. This is all we are saying at present - and we cannot avoid Malaysia since they have leaked it. I am in fact guiding away from Hong Kong. We have never canvassed Philippines or S. Korea. Best is speculation or putting 2 and 2 together. Will you respond?

[Handwritten signature]