

FUTURE OF HONG KONG

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TO IMMEDIATE F C O

TELEGRAM NUMBER 1656 OF 19 JUNE

INFO IMMEDIATE PEKING

GREEN PAPER ON CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

1. THE DRAFT GREEN PAPER WAS CONSIDERED BY THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL TODAY. THE COUNCIL'S VIEWS WERE AS FOLLOWS:-

(A) THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

THEY AGREED THAT ONLY ONE PROPOSITION CONCERNING THE FUTURE COMPOSITION OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN THE GREEN PAPER. THIS PROPOSITION SHOULD COVER ONLY THE CHANGES PROPOSED FOR 1985 AND 1988: AND SHOULD FOR 1988 BE

(A) ELECTED BY ELECTORAL COLLEGE	12
(B) ELECTED BY FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCIES	12
(C) APPOINTED BY GOVERNOR	16
(D) OFFICIAL MEMBERS	10
TOTAL	50

2. TO ALLOW FOR FLEXIBILITY NO (NO) FIRM CONCLUSION SHOULD BE REACHED NOW ON 1991. FOR THAT DATE THERE SHOULD BE A MENTION IN THE PAPER OF MORE THAN ONE POSSIBILITY, TO INCLUDE THE DISAPPEARANCE OF ALL APPOINTED MEMBERS; THE RETENTION OF SOME APPOINTED MEMBERS; AND THE POSSIBILITY OF DIRECT ELECTIONS. DECISIONS FOR 1991 SHOULD DEPEND ON A REVIEW AFTER THE 1988 ELECTIONS.

(B) THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

THE PROPOSALS CONCERNING EXCO WERE GENERALLY AGREED BUT THE

THE POSSIBILITY OF DIRECT ELECTIONS. DECISIONS FOR 1991 SHOULD DEPEND ON A REVIEW AFTER THE 1988 ELECTIONS.

(B) THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

3. THE PROPOSALS CONCERNING EXCO WERE GENERALLY AGREED, BUT THE POSSIBILITY OF MODIFYING IN THE 1988 REVIEW THE COMPOSITION PROPOSED FOR EXCO IN 1991 SHOULD BE LEFT OPEN IN THE PAPER:

(C) THE GOVERNOR

4. THERE WAS A GENERAL VIEW THAT A GOVERNOR ELECTED BY SOME MEANS OR OTHER SHOULD BE IN PLACE BEFORE 1997, HOWEVER, IT WAS CONSIDERED THAT THE PROPOSALS IN THE GREEN PAPER AND IN PARTICULAR MENTION OF 1992 WERE TOO SPECIFIC AND MNGHT BE INTERPRETED AS AN INDICATION THAT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT WAS PLANNING TO RELINQUISH RESPONSIBILITY FOR HONG KONG WELL BEFORE 1997. THIS WOULD HAVE A DE-STABILISING EFFECT. ON THE OTHER HAND, TO SAY NOTHING ABOUT THE POSITION OF THE GOVERNOR WOULD LEAD TO AN IMMEDIATE SUSPICION THAT SOMETHING WAS BEING HELD BACK; AND THE PUBLICATION OF THE GREEN PAPER WOULD INEVITABLY PROMPT QUESTIONS ABOUT THE GOVERNOR TO WHICH SOME ANSWER WOULD HAVE TO BE GIVEN.

5. THE COUNCIL THEREFORE ASKED THAT THE PROPOSALS IN CHAPTER 7 OF THE GREEN PAPER SHOULD BE REWRITTEN WITHOUT ANY SPECIFIC DATES. THEY SHOULD ALSO BE PRESENTED MORE TENTATIVELY AS THE NATURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE GOVERNMENTAL SYSTEM FOLLOWING THE CHANGES PROPOSED TO THE LEGISLATIVE AND EXECUTIVE COUNCILS RATHER THAN AS SPECIFIC PROPOSITIONS.

6. A REVISED DRAFT OF THE GREEN PAPER IS NOW BEING PREPARED WHICH WILL BE CONSIDERED AGAIN BY EXCO AS SOON AS MINISTERS HAVE CONSIDERED THE ISSUE. A REVISED DRAFT WILL BE SENT TO YOU BY THE END OF THIS WEEK.

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