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FM HONG KONG 150925Z AUG 84
TO IMMEDIATE FCO
TELEGRAM NUMBER 2367 OF 15 AUGUST
INFO IMMEDIATE PEKING

FOLLOWING FOR CRADOCK FROM GOVERNOR.
YOUR TELNO 1593: FUTURE OF HONG KONG: VISIT OF EXCO UNOFFICIALS
TO LONDON.

1. THERE WAS FURTHER DISCUSSION IN EXCO THIS MORNING ON THE TIMING OF A VISIT BY EXCO UNOFFICIALS TO LONDON, IN THE LIGHT OF THE ABSENCE OF THE PRIME MINISTER IN SOUTH EAST ASIA FROM SEPTEMBER 14 TO 27 AND THE SECRETARY OF STATE'S ENGAGEMENTS.
2. DURING THIS DISCUSSION THERE WAS SUPPORT AMONG MEMBERS FOR SIR S.Y. CHUNG'S VIEW THAT, ASSUMING THAT THERE WAS NO LARGE HITCH ON THE OUTSTANDING MATTERS, A MAJOR PURPOSE OF THE VISIT WOULD BE TO URGE ON THE PRIME MINISTER THAT SHE HERSELF SHOULD SIGN THE AGREEMENT AT THE END OF THE YEAR WITH THE CHINESE PRIME MINISTER. THEY TOOK THIS VIEW ON THE GROUND THAT IT WAS VITAL TO HONG KONG TO COMMIT THE CHINESE TO THE AGREEMENT AT AS HIGH A LEVEL AS POSSIBLE. THIS WOULD GIVE THE AGREEMENT GREATER STATUS IN THE EYES OF PEOPLE IN HONG KONG AND GIVE THEM GREATER CONFIDENCE THAT THE CHINESE WOULD NOT GO BACK ON THEIR COMMITMENT TO IMPLEMENT IT.
3. I DID NOT OF COURSE REVEAL THE CONTINGENCY ARRANGEMENT IN YOUR TELNO 1953. BUT I BELIEVE THERE IS FORCE IN THE ARGUMENT ABOVE. IN ADDITION IF, AS SEEMS LIKELY, HMG WILL NOW HAVE THE SUPPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL FOR THE AGREEMENT IT WOULD TO ME SEEM A FAIR RESPONSE TO GIVE UNOFFICIALS THE OPPORTUNITY OF BEING SEEN TO BE CONSULTED BY THE P.M. BEFORE INITIALLING AND OF PUTTING THEIR CASE DIRECT TO THE PRIME MINISTER ON THE QUESTION OF SIGNATURE.
4. ON THIS BASIS IT LOOKS AS THOUGH WE SHOULD PLAN FOR EXCO UNOFFICIALS TO TRAVEL TO LONDON IN THE WEEK BEGINNING SEPTEMBER 10.

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IT COULD BE OF COURSE THAT WE WILL BE ENGAGED IN SOME CLIFF-HANING
LAST MINUTE NEGOTIATION WITH THE CHINESE AT THAT TIME BUT THE
PRESENCE OF EXCO UNOFFICIALS IN LONDON WOULD BE A HELP RATHER THAN
A HINDRANCE IN SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES.

YOUDE

FUTURE OF HONG KONG
LIMITED

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HD/PUSD
DEP HD/PUSD
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