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DESKBY 220100Z

FM FCO 211340Z SEP 84

TO IMMEDIATE HONG KONG

TELEGRAM NUMBER 1908 OF 21 SEPTEMBER

INFO IMMEDIATE PEKING

OUR TELNO 1842: FUTURE OF HONG KONG: TEST OF ACCEPTABILITY

1. WE DISCUSSED THIS BRIEFLY WITH THE GOVERNOR, AND HAVE NOW DISCUSSED THE TIMING OF THE PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE FURTHER WITH THE SECRETARY OF STATE.

2. WE HAVE ESTABLISHED THAT IT IS EXTREMELY UNLIKELY TO BE POSSIBLE TO HOLD A PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE IN THE SECOND WEEK OF DECEMBER. THE ONLY SAFE COURSE THEREFORE IS TO SEEK A DEBATE TOWARDS THE END OF THE FIRST WEEK OF DECEMBER.

3. IT IS ESSENTIAL TO PUBLISH THE REPORTS ON ACCEPTABILITY (BY THE ASSESSMENT OFFICE AND THE MONITORING TEAM) BY THE END OF THE PRECEDING WEEK AT THE LATEST. WE SHOULD THEREFORE NEED TO RECEIVE THE TEXTS OF THOSE REPORTS EARLY IN THAT WEEK (26-30 NOVEMBER). IF COMPILING THE REPORTS CANNOT BE DONE IN LESS THAN TWO WEEKS, THIS WOULD MEAN THAT THE UNIT WOULD HAVE TO CEASE TAKING EVIDENCE ON 9 NOVEMBER OR THEREABOUTS LEAVING JUST OVER SIX AND A HALF WEEKS FOR THE SUBMISSION OF VIEWS IN HONG KONG.

4. WE CAN SEE NO WAY OF COMPRESSING THE TIMESCALE OF OUR PART OF THE EXERCISE BECAUSE OF THE PHYSICAL DIFFICULTY OF SETTING THE PRINT. WE ASSUME THAT THE REPORTS WILL BE SUBSTANTIAL DOCUMENTS. UNLESS THE ASSESSMENT UNIT CAN TAKE LESS THAN TWO WEEKS ACTUALLY TO DRAW UP THEIR REPORTS, WE SEE NO ALTERNATIVE TO THE ABOVE TIMING.

HOWE

FUTURE OF HONG KONG
LIMITED

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DEP HD/PUSD
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