

CCBYSP
PRIME MINISTER

MEETING WITH CHINESE STUDENTS

You are to see a group of Chinese students at 1030 tomorrow: I attach a list of them. They want to discuss our reaction to recent events in China and our policy towards Chinese students in this country.

Reaction to events in China

You will want to tell them of our very firm and forthright reaction and the measures which we have taken (cancellation of Ministerial visits, suspension of high level Ministerial contacts and a ban on arms sales). We are taking a number of other measures, including postponement of consideration by the World Bank of loans and restriction on new aid. But you have opposed trade sanctions because of possible retaliation against Hong Kong.

You have also instigated the European Council in Madrid to issue a strong statement and encouraged other European countries to take measures similar to ours. It is not so easy to take action in the United Nations, since there is a tradition of non-interference in other countries' affairs - and anyway the Chinese would veto it.

Position of Chinese students

You can say to the students that we shall look sympathetically at any applications to stay from those who do not wish to return to China for the present. Anyone whose visa is due to expire should apply to the Home Office for an extension, either by post or by going in person to Lunar house in Croydon. You can promise them that all applications will be treated in strict confidence. We are also willing to issue travel documents to those whose passports are about to expire and who are unwilling to apply to the Chinese authorities for renewal of their passports.

They may ask about political asylum. You should say that this is a step which could have serious consequences for them in China. It would require very careful reflection. It might be better to extend their stay under the other arrangements while they reflect on their position.

If some of them have financial difficulties, the Home Office will remove any employment restrictions to enable them to take paid work or register as being available for work.

If they want points of contact, you can hand over the attached note (I will have copies) which suggests people to get in touch with.

C.D.P.

CHARLES POWELL

27 June 1989

CONFIDENTIAL

cc PC
Back-up



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

27 June 1989

Dear Charles

Chinese Students

Thank you for your letter of 23 June about the call on the Prime Minister by a group of Chinese students at 10.30am on Wednesday 28 June. The delegation represents the Chinese Students and Scholars Association, who claim to speak on behalf of all the 3,500 or so PRC students and scholars studying in the UK.

It is apparent from the letter which the Association sent to the Prime Minister on 21 June that the delegation will wish to discuss:

- a) the British Government's reaction to recent events in China; and
- b) our policy towards Chinese students in this country.

The Prime Minister may wish to emphasise that the British Government, like the British people, have been appalled by the brutal suppression of peaceful demonstrations in Peking and by the subsequent persecution of those demanding their democratic rights. She may wish to explain the steps taken by the British Government to register our outrage at the action of the Chinese authorities: the cancellation of Ministerial visits to and from China; the suspension of high-level military contacts and a ban on arms sales.

The Prime Minister will also be able to describe the condemnation of the Chinese Government by the Madrid European Council. If appropriate, you may wish to arrange for the delegation to be given copies of the statement on China issued by the Council. She may, however, wish to explain that it is not for governments to propose resolutions in the European Parliament.

The delegation may also ask about action to censure the Chinese Government in other international fora, notably the UN. The Secretary General of the UN has already issued a statement expressing his great sadness at the use of force against demonstrations in Peking. He has appealed to the

/Chinese

CONFIDENTIAL



CONFIDENTIAL

Chinese to use the utmost restraint. But he is inhibited by the requirement of the Charter that the United Nations should abstain from intervention in regard to matters that are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of states. Similar inhibitions apply to the UN Security Council, in which of course, China has a veto. The UN General Assembly will not be meeting until the Autumn; the UN Commission on Human Rights is not scheduled to meet again until February 1990. We are however exploring the possibility with our Western partners of raising China in the forthcoming Summer meetings of the UN Economic and Social Councils.

With regard to the Commonwealth, the Prime Minister might wish to point out that many Commonwealth leaders have already expressed their dismay at recent events in China. Subject to developments between now and October, this is a subject on which Commonwealth leaders may wish to express their continued concern at CHOGM.

The delegation is likely to ask the Prime Minister for further assurances about the position of Chinese students already in the UK. Our understanding is that there are at present some 205 officially sponsored Chinese students in the UK who are due to return to China by 1 October. The Prime Minister may wish to reiterate that we shall look sympathetically at any applications from Chinese nationals who were here on 4 June, and do not wish to return to China for the present. Anyone whose visa is due to expire should apply to the Home Office, Lunar House, Croydon for a six month extension. Home Office Ministers have already informed the universities and colleges about this. Applications can be made by post or in person to the Public Enquiry Office in Lunar House. All applications will be treated in strict confidence. Any decisions on further extensions of stay will be taken in the light of events in China. The Prime Minister could add that we would be willing to issue Home Office travel documents to those who wish to travel abroad whose passports are about to expire and who, for good reason, are unwilling or unable to apply to the Chinese authorities for renewal of their existing passports.

If the delegation asks about political asylum, the Prime Minister might explain that in order to be eligible for asylum under the terms of the UN Convention on Refugees, a person must show that he has "a well founded fear of persecution in his home country". She could point out that this is a big step that has potentially serious consequences for an applicant in his home country. She might therefore suggest that anyone who is uncertain about his position should seek an extension of his stay from the Home Office.

/The

CONFIDENTIAL



CONFIDENTIAL

The delegation is likely to urge that financial support should be provided for Chinese students in financial difficulties. The Prime Minister might say that Chinese students or other visitors who face such difficulties should, in the first instance, inform the Home Office. If appropriate, the Home Office will remove any employment restrictions on their stay in the UK. This would allow those concerned to take paid work in the UK or alternatively to register as being available for work and to claim assistance from the Department of Social Security. They would also be eligible for free medical care.

Finally, the Chinese Students and Scholars Association have asked for the appointment of a government official to act as a liaison with Chinese students in this country. The Prime Minister might say that any general questions about the visa status of Chinese students in the UK should be addressed to the Public Enquiry Office of the Home Office, Lunar House, Croydon. Mr Stan Spence, in B1 Division of the Immigration and Nationality Department of the Home Office at the same address (telephone number 760 2518) will be happy to discuss matters of immigration policy as they affect Chinese students. Mrs Barbara Smith in the Overseas Students Welfare Group of the British Council at 10 Spring Gardens, London SW1A 2BN (telephone number 389 4510) is ready to offer advice on academic matters.

The Foreign Secretary has not seen this letter in draft. He will see it tonight, and if he has any comments on it I shall pass them to you before tomorrow's call.

I am copying this letter to the Private Secretaries of the Home Secretary, the Secretary of State for Social Security and the Minister of Overseas Development.

Yours ever

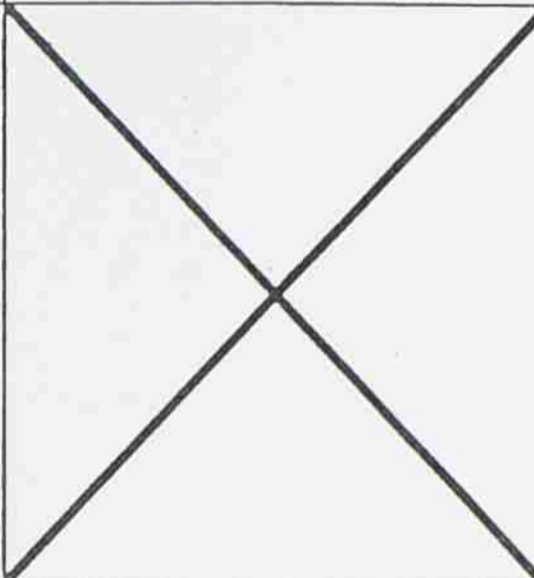
R N Peirce

(R N Peirce)
Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq
PS/10 Downing Street

CONFIDENTIAL

A The National Archives

DEPARTMENT/SERIES <i>PREM 19</i> PIECE/ITEM <i>2597</i> (one piece/item number)	Date and sign
Extract details: <i>Wing to Powell dated 27 June 1989</i>	
CLOSED UNDER FOI EXEMPTION	
RETAINED UNDER SECTION 3(4) OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT 1958	
TEMPORARILY RETAINED	<i>14/10/2016</i> <i>S. Gray</i>
MISSING AT TRANSFER	
NUMBER NOT USED	
MISSING (TNA USE ONLY)	
DOCUMENT PUT IN PLACE (TNA USE ONLY)	

DEPARTMENT/SERIES <i>PPM 19</i> PIECE/ITEM <i>2597</i> (one piece/item number)	Date and sign
Extract details: <i>Lowell to Peirce dated 28 June 1989</i>	
CLOSED UNDER FOI EXEMPTION	
RETAINED UNDER SECTION 3(4) OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT 1958	
TEMPORARILY RETAINED	<i>14/10/2016</i> <i>S. Young</i>
MISSING AT TRANSFER	
NUMBER NOT USED	
MISSING (TNA USE ONLY)	
DOCUMENT PUT IN PLACE (TNA USE ONLY)	