

CONFIDENTIAL
FM WASHINGTON
TO DESKBY 130830Z FCO
TELNO 1874
OF 122205Z JULY 89
INFO DESKBY 130830Z PARIS
INFO IMMEDIATE HONG KONG, UKMIS GENEVA

YOUR TELNO 1288: VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE IN HONG KONG
SUMMARY

1. RECOMMENDATIONS ON HANDLING THIS ISSUE AT THE BILATERALS WITH BUSH AND BAKER IN PARIS.

DETAIL

2. WE KNOW FROM THE EUROPEAN BUREAU IN STATE THAT CATTO REPORTED HIS DISCUSSION WITH THE PUS (TUR) VERY PROMPTLY, AND THAT HE WAS STRUCK BY THE ROBUSTNESS OF OUR POSITION. STATE COMMENTED THAT WE NOW SEEMED TO BE AT THE STAGE OF WAVING FISTS RATHER THAN WAGGING FINGERS, AND ADDED (UNHELPFULLY THOUGH PROBABLY TRUTHFULLY) THAT OPINION THROUGHOUT THE STATE DEPARTMENT REMAINS SOLIDLY AGAINST US. WE RESTATED OUR POSITION. THERE HAS BEEN NO SIGN SO FAR OF STATE TAKING UP MORE FORMALLY WITH US THE POINTS MADE BY THE PUS.

3. THE NEXT MAJOR OPPORTUNITY TO GET OUR POSITION ACROSS WILL BE THE BILATERALS THAT YOU AND THE PRIME MINISTER WILL BE HAVING WITH BAKER AND THE PRESIDENT IN PARIS. I VERY MUCH HOPE THAT THIS SUBJECT CAN BE RAISED AT BOTH MEETINGS: NOT TO DO SO WOULD RISK LEAVING THE AMERICANS WITH THE IMPRESSION THAT WE FEEL LESS STRONGLY ON THE ISSUE THAN IS IN FACT THE CASE.

4. IN THE LIGHT OF THE MANY EXCHANGES WE HAVE HAD WITH THE AMERICANS OVER RECENT WEEKS, I SUGGEST THAT THE POINTS TO STRESS IN PARIS ARE:

(I) THAT WE HAVE A GENUINE DIFFERENCE OF VIEW ARISING FROM OUR DIFFERENT POLITICAL PROBLEMS. BUT THE AMERICANS' PROBLEM (MANAGING CONGRESSIONAL AND PUBLIC OPINION) IS OF A VERY DIFFERENT ORDER FROM THE ACUTE CRISIS WE FACE IN HONG KONG

(II) IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES, AND RECOGNISING THAT OUR DIFFERENCES ARE UNLIKELY TO BE BRIDGED IN THE SHORT TERM, OUR AIM AT THE VERY LEAST SHOULD BE TO AVOID MAKING LIFE MORE DIFFICULT FOR EACH OTHER

(III) WE WILL BE TAKING EVERY CARE TO PRESENT REPATRIATION IN A WAY THAT TAKES ACCOUNT OF AMERICAN SENSITIVITIES (FULL APPEALS PROCEDURE, NO QUESTION OF FORCIBLE REPATRIATION, CAREFUL MONITORING OF THOSE RETURNED, ETC).

(IV) IN RETURN WE HAVE A RIGHT TO EXPECT THAT THE AMERICANS WILL NOT MAKE LIFE MORE DIFFICULT FOR US. IN THAT CONTEXT, WE FIND IT PARTICULARLY HARD TO UNDERSTAND:

WHY THE US SHOULD BE PROPOSING TO TAKE A SMALLER PROPORTION OF REFUGEES FROM HONG KONG THAN FROM THE REGION AS A WHOLE. THE AMERICANS COULD MAKE A MAJOR CONTRIBUTION BY AGREEING TO TAKE EARLY ON A SIGNIFICANT PERCENTAGE OF REFUGEES FROM HONG KONG. THAT WOULD BOTH HELP RELIEVE THE PRESSURE IN THE CAMPS, AND GIVE A BOOST TO MORALE IN HONG KONG WITHOUT AFFECTING THE US POSITION ON REPATRIATION, OR THEIR CRITERIA FOR RESETTLEMENT, SINCE THE US WOULD ONLY BE TAKING IN THOSE WITH REFUGEE STATUS. BUT TO CUT BACK ON RESETTLEMENT FROM HONG KONG ONLY COMPOUNDS HONG KONG'S PROBLEMS WITHOUT MAKING ANY CONTRIBUTION TO A SOLUTION.

- WHY THE US SHOULD APPARENTLY BE LEADING THE PACK AGAINST US BY ENCOURAGING UNHCR TO BE DIFFICULT OVER THE MONITORING OF THOSE SENT BACK TO VIETNAM. SURELY THE PRINCIPLE OF EFFECTIVE MONITORING IS COMMON GROUND BETWEEN US, AND IS NOT THE UNHCR THE BEST TOOL FOR THE JOB? AGAIN, PUTTING A SPANNER INTO THESE WORKS ACHIEVES NOTHING USEFUL, BUT MAKES OUR OWN PROBLEMS MORE DIFFICULT.

5. IF IT IS STILL THE INTENTION (HONG KONG TELNO 2298) TO SEND BACK THE FIRST BATCH OF THOSE WHO HAVE COMPLETED THE APPEALS PROCESS ON OR SHORTLY AFTER 17 JULY, I BELIEVE THAT IT WILL BE IMPORTANT TO GIVE THE PRESIDENT OR BAKER ADVANCE NOTICE OF THIS DURING THE BILATERALS IN PARIS. THEY MAY WELL TAKE THAT AS A CUE FOR PRESSURE ON US TO DELAY. ON THE OTHER HAND, NOT TELLING THEM, AND THEN PROCEEDING WITH THE REPATRIATION A FEW DAYS LATER WOULD ADD ANOTHER BONE OF CONTENTION TO AN ALREADY DIFFICULT DEBATE.

6. FOR NAD: GRATEFUL IF YOU COULD ARRANGE FOR A COPY OF THIS TELEGRAM TO BE SHOWN TO SIR A ACLAND IF POSSIBLE.

FALL