



ALW040/325/1

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

1 February 1980

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- cc: Heads of WIAD
 SED
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 HKGD

POLICY TOWARDS THE DEPENDENT TERRITORIES

1. I enclose a memorandum setting out the basic policy of Her Majesty's Government towards the United Kingdom's remaining dependent overseas territories. It has been approved by the Secretary of State as the basis for guidance to Officers Administering Governments.
2. For the most part the memorandum restates the broad lines of policy that have been followed by successive Governments since 1945. But it lays down a somewhat tougher line than has sometimes been adopted in the past about what powers can be delegated to local governments in territories that opt to remain dependent.
3. The views of those Governors principally concerned were of course taken into account in preparing the memorandum. But it would still help us to know if any of the policy as stated is likely to cause problems in your territory. I should stress that the memorandum does not apply to those "political" territories - ie Hong Kong, the Falkland Islands, Belize and Gibraltar - whose relations with a neighbouring foreign power inhibit in any case an 'orderly' move to independence; to the New Hebrides, which is soon to be independent; to Pitcairn, which with its 60-odd inhabitants will thereafter be our only remaining dependency in the Pacific; or in large measure, because of its advanced stage of self-government and its capacity to attain independence, to Bermuda.
4. At present the memorandum is a United Kingdom classified paper. But we should like to downgrade it so that copies can at least be made available to Local Ministers or Legislatures. There may be advantage in giving it even wider circulation, both in the Dependent Territories themselves and in Britain. I should value your advice about this. Are there any changes which you would like made before the memorandum is more widely disseminated (without prejudice of course to the policy which Ministers have approved). On the face of it, it is a perfectly straightforward statement of policy; and I see no reason why it should not be made generally known. We would of course ensure that, if this were done, the special position of Hong Kong and the other "political" territories was made clear.

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PLYMOUTH
 ST. HELENA



Foreign and Commonwealth Office
London SW1A 2AA

Form No. 122 (1/72)

5. Wider dissemination of the memorandum could be accelerated if Ministers were to decide that it should be given to the House of Commons Select Committee on Foreign Affairs, which will almost certainly be considering the future of our Dependent Territories during the course of this year. Since the Committee's activities are normally public, this would amount to publication in the United Kingdom. We shall naturally keep you informed about this.

6. I am sending a similar letter to all other Officers Administering Governments.

R J Stratton

ANGUILLA	C H Godden Esq H M Commissioner
BELIZE	J P I Hennessy Esq CMG OBE (wef 1.3.80) Governor and Commander-in-Chief (designate)
BERMUDA	The Hon Sir Peter Ramsbotham GCMG GCVO Governor and Commander-in-Chief
BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS	J A Davidson Esq OBE Governor
CAYMAN ISLANDS	T Russell Esq CBE Governor
Falkland Islands* and British Antarctic Territory**	R M Hunt Esq CMG (wef 20.2.1980) Governor and Commander in Chief* High Commissioner (designate)
GIBRALTAR	General Sir William Jackson GBE KCB MC Governor and Commander-in-Chief
HONG KONG	Sir Murray MacLehose GBE KCMG KCVO Governor and Commander-in-Chief
MONTSERRAT	G W Jones Esq CBE Governor
NEW HEBRIDES	A C Stuart Esq CMG CPM British Resident Commissioner
PITCAIRN	Sir Harold Smedley KCMG MBE Governor British High Commission, WELLINGTON
ST HELENA	G C Guy Esq CMG CVO OBE Governor and Commander-in-Chief
TURKS & CAICOS	J C Strong, Esq CBE

PERSONAL & CONFIDENTIAL

MEMORANDUM

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POLICY TOWARDS THE DEPENDENT TERRITORIES

General Policy

1. The present British Government are fully committed to the policy followed by successive Governments since 1945 of giving every help and encouragement to those Dependent Territories which wish to become independent, while not forcing independence on those which do not want it. Wherever independence is feasible, we will seek to create the conditions which will make it a realistic and desirable objective. Where local governments have made it clear that they do not wish their territories to become independent, we are content to retain sovereignty for the time being. But we must also retain the legal powers necessary to ensure that we are able to fulfil the responsibilities that sovereignty entails. In those territories where international political considerations rule out the possibility of independence, or rule it out for the present, we will seek the most suitable arrangements for the territories' administration. Each case will be considered on its merits, bearing in mind the constraints imposed by external political circumstances and the wishes of the local population.

Powers to be retained by the British Government

2. Responsibility and power must go together. Political development must therefore stop some way short of full internal self-government where territories choose to remain dependent. In such cases the British Government, through the Governor, will retain overall responsibility for:-

- (i) external affairs;
- (ii) defence;
- (iii) internal security, including administration of the police;
- (iv) the administration of the public service;
- (v) the judiciary.

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3. In certain territories, limited powers in some of these areas have already been delegated to local governments. It is not the intention to reverse those decisions, but no further delegations will be agreed in respect of these particular responsibilities. We will, however, be prepared to consider sympathetically any proposals that Governors may care to put forward for increasing the powers of local governments in other areas.

4. Where a territory's government have announced their intention to move to independence, a programme will be agreed for the various stages of constitutional change. There can be no standard timetable for this: the pace will largely be dictated by local circumstances. In all cases, the Governor will retain until the last moment formal responsibility for at least the first three of the matters listed in paragraph 2 above, though it will undoubtedly be appropriate for him to consult the local Premier increasingly about the way he exercises these responsibilities as independence approaches.

5. Any constitutional changes introduced as a result of a decision to move towards independence will, of course, need to be reviewed if that decision is subsequently reversed (for example as a result of a change of government in the territory concerned). This could entail the resumption by Governors of powers that had already been delegated in anticipation of independence.

The Role of British Aid

6. The reasonable needs of the Dependent Territories will continue to be a first call on our aid programme. In deciding how aid resources should be used in the Dependent Territories, our principal objective will be to create a political and economic climate that will make independence a realistic and

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attractive alternative to continuing colonial status. We recognise, however, that in some territories the possibility of genuine economic independence is remote. In the past, a generous allocation of development aid (and in certain cases also budgetary aid) has often formed a vital ingredient in achieving a final independence agreement. The possibility of similar action will be borne in mind in future cases, subject to the overall constraints placed on the aid programme by the Government's general economic policies.

Alternatives to Independence

7. The Government's preference will remain a straight choice between continued dependence or full independence. We will nevertheless be prepared to consider on their merits any proposals for alternative arrangements that may be thought appropriate for particular territories. These could include association or integration with another country where this is locally acceptable, but will certainly not again include the relationship provided for under the 1967 West Indies Act which led to the creation of the West Indies Associated States. British experience since 1967 has clearly demonstrated the drawbacks of an arrangement which left the Government answerable for the consequences of policies over which they had no control.

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ANNEX A

THE DEPENDENT TERRITORIES

<u>Territory</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Area</u> (sq miles)
Belize	137,000	8,866
Bermuda	57,000	20½
British Antarctic Territory	Transient	666,000
British Indian Ocean Territory	Transient	87
British Virgin Islands	11,000	59
Cayman Islands	12,000	100
Falkland Islands and Dependencies	1,930 [?]	6,207
Gibraltar	31,000	21¼
Hong Kong	4,900,000	404
Montserrat	12,500	40
New Hebrides	100,000	5,700
Pitcairn Islands Group	61	1¾
St Helena and Dependencies	6,500	119
Turks and Caicos Islands	6,500	166