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10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

10 October 1984

HONG KONG: SIGNATURE OF  
AGREEMENT

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Thank you for your letter of 9 October about the signature of the Hong Kong agreement.

The Prime Minister agrees that Sir Richard Evans should speak to the Chinese in the terms proposed in your letter. But I think it would be wise to stop short of a firm commitment. "The Prime Minister intends, if circumstances permit, to go to Peking herself ....." would serve.

CHARLES POWELL

Peter Ricketts, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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10 DOWNING STREET

Prime Minister

Agree that we

may tell the

Chinese that you

intend to sign the

Hong Kong Agreement,

while leaving the precise

date open?

CDP

9/x.

Yes mt

copy (6)



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

9 October, 1984

*Dear Charles,*

Hong Kong: Signature of Agreement

Thank you for your letter of 4 October, recording that the Prime Minister will herself go to Peking, accompanied by the Foreign Secretary, to sign the Hong Kong agreement. We note the Prime Minister's wish to postpone until the beginning of November a decision on timing and the inclusion of other countries in her travels. You suggested that we would want to consider, in advance of that decision, whether we needed to say something more definite to the Chinese Government about the Prime Minister's intentions.

Sir Geoffrey Howe believes that it would indeed be useful both to tell the Chinese Government soon of the Prime Minister's decision (he has already mentioned informally to the Chinese Prime Minister that the Prime Minister hoped to be able to do this) and to explain to them our provisional thinking on timing. Whether the visit takes place before or after Christmas, the window of opportunity will be narrow. We want to be certain that what we may propose will be compatible with Chinese plans, and in particular that Premier Zhao Ziyang will be able to receive the Prime Minister at the time in question.

If the Prime Minister agrees, therefore, we would now propose to instruct Sir Richard Evans to tell the Chinese: that the Prime Minister proposes to go to Peking herself for the signature of the Hong Kong agreement; that, while no final decision on timing has been made the visit would in practice have to take place either in the ten days before Christmas or the last few days in December; that we would confirm which of those two alternatives the Prime Minister wished to pursue as soon as she was in a position to take a decision: and that in the meantime we would be most interested to know whether on their side there are any considerations of timing which we should take into account.

We shall let you have further advice in November about the inclusion of other countries, subject of course to the domestic situation. In the meantime, I shall be letting you have very shortly a holding reply to the President of Sri Lanka about a possible visit there to open the Victoria Dam.

C D Powell Esq  
10 Downing Street

*Yr ever*  
(P F Ricketts) *P F Ricketts*  
Private Secretary

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9 OCT 1984