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TELEGRAM NUMBER 3611 OF 26 NOVEMBER  
INFO IMMEDIATE PEKING, HONG KONG GOVERNMENT OFFICE LONDON.  
INFO ROUTINE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT REPS WASHINGTON, NEW YORK, GENEVA,  
BRUSSELS.

Prime Minister  
It was the origin  
of the Daily Telegraph  
story this morning.

CD  
26/11/84

FUTURE OF HONG KONG: PRESS COVERAGE FOR 24, 25 AND 26 NOVEMBER.

SUMMARY:

1. THE MAJOR FUTURE RELATED STORY CONCERNED THE RELEASE OF THE FINDINGS OF THE SRH PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY. OTHER STORIES CONCERNED THE SIGNING OF THE AGREEMENT, THE PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE AND UMELCO: AND THE WHITE PAPER ON REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT.

NEWS COVERAGE:

2. SRH POLL: EXTENSIVE AND PROMINENT COVERAGE HAS BEEN GIVEN TO THE POLL, PARTICULARLY BY 3 OF THE SPONSORS, MING PAO, ORIENTAL DAILY NEWS (BOTH INDEPENDENT) AND THE SCMP, WHO ALL CARRIED DETAILED REPORTS OF THE FINDINGS ON SATURDAY. OTHER PAPERS FOLLOWED UP TODAY AFTER A PRESS CONFERENCE YESTERDAY. THE GENERAL VIEW, ALSO PICKED UP BY THE LEADING LEFT-WING PAPERS, WAS THAT THE PUBLIC SAID 'YES BUT' TO THE AGREEMENT (ALTHOUGH WEN WEI PO NOTED THE YES RATHER THAN THE BUTS). ABOUT 80 PER CENT OF INTERVIEWEES GENERALLY WELCOMED THE AGREEMENT, (WITH SOME RESERVATIONS). MING PAO AND SING TAO JIH PAO BOTH HEADLINED THE POINT THAT THE DEGREE OF ACCEPTABILITY INCREASED IN LINE WITH PEOPLE'S AWARENESS OF THE AGREEMENT. MING PAO EMPHASISED THAT THE SURVEY WAS NOT (NOT) CONDUCTED BECAUSE PEOPLE HAD NO FAITH IN THE ASSESSMENT OFFICE. SING TAO JIH PAO SAID THAT PEOPLE WERE PARTICULARLY CONCERNED ABOUT CIVIL RIGHTS. HK DAILY NEWS (INDEPENDENT) FOCUSED ON INDICATIONS THAT 50 PER CENT OF PEOPLE WOULD NOT 'SET THEIR HEARTS AT EASE' UNTIL THE AGREEMENT WAS HONOURED. HK TIMES (PRO-TAIPEI) SAID THE MAJORITY OF INTERVIEWEES FELT THERE TO BE A LACK OF ASSURANCES IN THE AGREEMENT.

3. THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE EDITORIAL COMMENT ON THE SURVEY, WITH TIN TIN DAILY, CENTRE DAILY NEWS AND CHING PO (ALL PRO-CHINA) SAYING IT WAS UNDERSTANDABLE THAT PEOPLE ACCEPTED THE AGREEMENT WITH RESERVATIONS. THE PAPERS SAID THAT CHINA AND BRITAIN SHOULD IMPLEMENT THE AGREEMENT PRAGMATICALLY TO ALLAY HK PEOPLE'S WORRIES AND BOOST CONFIDENCE. CHING PO ADDED THAT THE FINDINGS INDICATED THAT THE AGREEMENT WAS A GOOD ONE, AND URGED HK PEOPLE TO CONTINUE TO WORK HARD FOR HK'S STABILITY AND PROSPERITY. A COLUMNIST IN TA KUNG PAO DESCRIBED THE SURVEY AS 'RESPONSIBLE'. MING PAO NOTED EDITORIALY THAT MOST HK PEOPLE ACCEPTED THAT HK WAS PART OF CHINA, AND 80 PER CENT OF INTERVIEWEES ACCEPTED THAT THE TERRITORY SHOULD BE RETURNED TO CHINA IN 1997. NONETHELESS, MANY PEOPLE STILL DISTRUSTED THE CHINESE REGIME AND HAD DOUBTS ABOUT HK'S FUTURE STATUS. SCMP SUMMED

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10p

\*~\* Name deleted and closed under FO1 Exemption  
@Shayland, 25 July 2014

UP THE POLL AS FAIR, REFLECTING FEARS, DOUBTS AND MISGIVINGS, AND RELUCTANCE TO TAKE THE PLUNGE TOWARDS A MOMENTOUS CHANGE. HOWEVER, THE DEGREE OF SUPPORT FOR THE AGREEMENT IS STILL REMARKABLE, AND COULD EVEN STRENGTHEN, GIVEN HARD WORK BY BRITAIN, CHINA AND HK ITSELF, THE PAPER ARGUED.

4. PRIME MINISTER: SPECULATION CONTINUED ON THE DATE OF THE PM'S VISIT TO PEKING. MOST PAPERS EXPECTED HER TO ARRIVE IN PEKING ON DECEMBER 18, AND SIGN THE AGREEMENT ON 19, BEFORE COMING TO HK ON 20 AND LEAVING FOR THE US ON 21. FINANCIAL DAILY DIFFERED, SAYING THE AGREEMENT WOULD BE SIGNED ON DECEMBER 21. SOURCES WERE QUOTED TO THE EFFECT THAT THE PM WOULD ALSO SIGN CONTRACTS ON SINO-BRITISH ECONOMIC COOPERATION. THE GOVERNOR WAS REPORTED TO HAVE SAID THAT HE WOULD ATTEND THE SIGNING, BUT THAT HIS DEPARTURE DATE WAS NOT YET FIXED.

5. LONDON TRIP: THE GOVERNOR SAID THAT THE PURPOSE OF HIS TRIP WAS TO BRIEF MPS ON PUBLIC REACTIONS. SIR S.Y. CHUNG SAID THAT UMELCO'S POSITION PAPER WOULD BE MADE PUBLIC ON THURSDAY, THE DAY BEFORE DEPARTURE FOR LONDON. UNOFFICIAL LEGCO MEMBER \*~\* SAID THEIR ASSESSMENT OFFICE WOULD PUBLISH ITS REPORT ON FRIDAY SO THAT THE UMELCO DELEGATION WOULD KNOW THE CONTENTS BEFORE THEIR DEPARTURE. SOME PAPERS EXPECTED THE COMMONS DEBATE TO TAKE PLACE ON DECEMBER 5 AND THE LORDS DEBATE ON DECEMBER 10.

6. REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT: THERE WAS CONFUSION OVER THE OATH OF ALLEGIANCE, WITH SOME REPORTS QUOTING THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS AS SAYING THE OATH WOULD CONTINUE AND OTHER REPORTS INDICATING THAT GOVERNMENT WAS CONSIDERING THE MATTER. PUBLIC COMMENT CONTINUED IN GENERAL TO SUPPORT THE GRADUAL APPROACH OUTLINED IN THE WHITE PAPER, ALTHOUGH THERE WERE SOME CALLS FOR A CLEARER OUTLINE OF DEVELOPMENTS BEYOND 1985, AND THERE WAS FURTHER DISCUSSION OF THE PROS AND CONS OF FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCIES, AND OF DIRECT ELECTIONS.

7. CATHAY PACIFIC: ECONOMIC JOURNAL (INDEPENDENT) REPORTED THAT CPA WAS CONFIDENT IT WOULD MAINTAIN EXISTING ROUTES BEYOND 1997, AND WAS ALSO OPTIMISTIC THAT IT WOULD REPLACE BA ON FLIGHTS BETWEEN HK AND PEKING. HOWEVER, SPOKESMAN FOR CPA AND BA NOTED THAT NO CONCRETE PLANS HAD YET BEEN MADE.

8. OTHER POINTS: ECONOMIC JOURNAL REPORTED THAT SEVERAL PROFESSIONAL BODIES (INCLUDING ENGINEERS, LAWYERS AND DOCTORS) WOULD HOLD A SEMINAR TOMORROW TO DISCUSS THEIR FUTURE. IT WAS REPORTED THAT ZHAO ZIYANG HAD VISITED ZHUHAI SEZ YESTERDAY. A SPOKESMAN FOR THE PRO-CHINA HK INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS COLLEGE SAID POST-SECONDARY COLLEGES WERE PREPARING A STATEMENT SUGGESTING THAT THEIR STUDENTS' VIEWS BE SOUGHT WHEN DRAFTING THE BASIC LAW. HE ALSO SUGGESTED THE NATIONALITY ISSUE BE RESOLVED BEFORE THE BASIC LAW IS DRAFTED.  
COMMENTARIES:

9. THE MAIN SUBJECT FOR COMMENTARY CONTINUED TO BE THE WHITE PAPER ON REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT, WITH COMMENTATORS SUGGESTING WAYS OF IMPLEMENTING THE REFORMS. THE HK DAILY NEWS (INDEPENDENT) URGED THE GOVERNMENT TO STRENGTHEN THE BASIC STRUCTURE AT DISTRICT BOARD

LEVEL, BY HAVING REPRESENTATIVES OF MUTUAL AID COMMITTEES AND OTHER REPRESENTATIVES BODIES BEING ABSORBED INTO THE DISTRICT BOARDS. THE SING PAO (INDEPENDENT) SAID THAT IT WAS THE WISH OF BOTH BRITAIN AND CHINA TO PRESERVE HONG KONG'S SYSTEMS OVER THE NEXT 13 YEARS: REFORMS SHOULD THEREFORE BE CARRIED OUT GRADUALLY AND PEOPLE SHOULD NOT PRESS FOR THE EARLY INTRODUCTION OF DIRECT ELECTIONS. MIAO YU OF THE ORIENTAL DAILY (INDEPENDENT) DECEIBED THE WHITE PAPER AS BRITAIN'S 'FAREWELL SHOW'. POWER IN THE FUTURE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MIGHT BE SHARED BETWEEN 'LITTELE POLITICIANS' WHO WERE AFTER POWER AND PEOPLE WHO WERE GENUINELY INTERESTED IN PRESERVING HONG KONG'S STABILITY AND PROSPERITY. IT WAS ALSO POSSIBLE THAT THE NEW LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MIGHT BE DOMINATED BY CAPABLE PEOPLE LOYAL TO THE EXISTING SYSTEM COMBINED WITH BRITISH IDEAS ON DEMOCRACY: THE CHINESE WOULD HOWEVER, BE UNLIKELY TO TOLERATE THIS BEYOND 1997.

10. A COLUMNIST IN NEW EVENING POST (COMMUNIST) ON 25 NOVEMBER, SUGGESTED THAT THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT WAS TRYING TO ARRANGE A FAIT ACCOMPLI BY PUSHING THE WHITE PAPER INTO PRINT BEFORE THE SIGNING OF THE AGREEMENT AND BEFORE THE DRAFTING OF THE BASIC LAW HAD BEGUN. 'SOME PEOPLE HAD EXPRESSED DOUBTS ABOUT THE WHITE PAPER BECAUSE HONG KONG'S FUTURE POLITICAL SYSTEM WAS NOT FOR THE BRITISH/ HONG KONG GOVERNMENTS TO DECIDE. IT WAS TOO EARLY TO SAY WHETHER THE WHITE PAPER REFORMS WOULD BE IN LINE WITH THE BASIC LAW SINCE THE DRAFTING OF THE BASIC LAW HAD NOT YET BEGUN.' A LETTER IN THE READERS FORUM OF THE WEN WEI PO (COMMUNIST) SAID THAT THE WHITE PAPER CONTAINED SOME USEFUL CHANGES (E.G. BRINGING FORWARD THE REVIEW) AS COMPARED WITH THE GREEN PAPER. THERE WERE, HOWEVER, STILL SOME SHORT COMINGS. THE NUMBER OF INDERECTLY ELECTED MEMBERS WOULD STILL BE SMALLER THAN THE TOTAL NUMBER OF APPOINTED AND OFFICIAL MEMBERS. THE ALLOCATION OF TWO FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCIES SEATS FOR LABOUR WAS NOT ENOUGH. THE ABSENCE OF ANY PROPOSAL TO REFORM THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL WAS OUT OF LINE WITH THE SPIRIT OF DEMOCRACY. RTFURTHER EFFORTS WERE NEEDED TO PRESS FOR DIRECT ELECTIONS.

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FUTURE OF HONG KONG

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 HD/PLANNING STAFF  
 HD/PUSD  
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