



bc PC.

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

28 January 1985

HONG KONG: JOINT LIAISON GROUP

Thank you for your letter of 25 January dealing with the question whether the Governor of Hong Kong should be a member of the Joint Liaison Group.

The Prime Minister notes the arguments advanced against the Governor being a member of the Group but would wish the views of EXCO on this point to be obtained before reaching a decision. I should be grateful if you would arrange for this to be done.

(Charles Powell)

P.R. Ricketts, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

CEPC
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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

25 January, 1985

Dear Charles,

Hong Kong: Joint Liaison Group

Under Annex 11 of the Hong Kong agreement it was agreed to establish a Sino-British Joint Liaison Group to help with the implementation of the agreement as from the coming into force of the agreement. Each side is to appoint five members of the Group. Each team is to be led by an official of "Ambassadorial" rank. For the first three years the Group will be peripatetic with meetings in Peking, London and Hong Kong. After July 1988 it will have its principal base in Hong Kong but will continue to meet as well in the two capitals.

Sir Geoffrey Howe discussed our approach to the Joint Liaison Group with the Governor of Hong Kong during his visit to London this week, and in particular whether or not the Governor should himself be a member of it.

The Governor is strongly of the view that he should not be a member of the Joint Liaison Group for the following reasons:

- If he were to be a member, it would give the Group too high a profile in Hong Kong and might give the impression that it was "an organ of power", despite the guarantees which we insisted on including, in Annex II to the agreement that this should not be the case.
- The Governor could not sit as number two on the Group in his own territory. He would have to be the leader of the Group. This would certainly cause difficulties with the Chinese who will expect the British leader to be a UK based official in order to emphasise the Sino-British character of the group.
- The Group will be peripatetic in its early years; for the Governor to have to attend its meetings would take him out of Hong Kong too much. Partly for this reason the idea is unpopular with Hong Kong public opinion.
- It is our intention that the Group should

Prime Minister
 This is a tricky one.
 But Percy Crabbe agrees with the choice that the Governor should not be a member of the JLG.
 Agree?
 or
 Ask for EXCO to be consulted first?
 CJP
 25/1
 Ask for EXCO to be consulted first
 no



concentrate on technical questions in its early years, and the Governor feels that he would not be able to give these full attention.

Such indications as we have are that the Chinese are thinking in terms of Ke Zaishuo, leader of their team in the Working Group during the negotiations, or someone of a similar rank, as the leader of their delegation to the Joint Liaison Group. Ke is an official of the Western European department of the Chinese MFA, who was promoted to "ambassador" rank for the negotiations. The Foreign Secretary believes that the right counterpart, and indeed the most appropriate leader of the Group from our point of view, would be the Assistant Under-Secretary in the FCO who is at present Dr Wilson, Ke's opposite number on the Working Group.

Hong Kong would be represented on the Group by the Political Adviser and by Hong Kong Government officials. We are discussing further with the Governor and the Ambassador how to achieve the right mix of Peking, Hong Kong and London-based officials. We are also asking the Ambassador in Peking to try to get a better idea informally of Chinese intentions for the staffing of their side of the Group before we go firm with decisions on our team.

If it is accepted that we should follow this approach, it raises the problem of how we should deal with public questions about the Prime Minister's comment at her Hong Kong press conference that she would expect the Governor to be on the Joint Liaison Group. So far we have said only that the composition of the Group remains to be determined. Sir Geoffrey proposes that we should continue to decline to be drawn on this until we are ready to announce the membership of the Group. This will not be for some time yet, since consultations with EXCO and then discussions with the Chinese will be necessary. When we are ready to go public we would explain that, following careful consideration of the practicalities and after discussion with the Chinese, we had decided that the appropriate leader on our side would be Dr Wilson: the Governor would not himself sit on the Group, but would be represented on it by his Political Adviser and other Hong Kong Government officials.

[It is will NOT be Mr. McClain but his successor] C.D.P.

Who will be the "political" adviser?

For ever

C D Powell Esq
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(P R Ricketts)
Private Secretary

Peter Ricketts