



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

10 December 1984

PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO PEKING:
MEETING WITH THE BRITISH PRESS

I have seen Peking telegram No. 2919 about the arrangements for briefing the British and Hong Kong correspondents in Peking.

I have consulted Bernard Ingham. His view is that the best way to proceed is for the Prime Minister to see British correspondents (both resident and visiting) at the Residence while he and Christopher Meyer brief the Hong Kong press in the Amenities Hall. This latter briefing might have to be earlier in the day. He feels that to admit 70 Hong Kong journalists to a briefing by the Prime Minister would entirely change its character. Nor is he attracted by the idea of a pool for Hong Kong journalists.

Mr. Ingham envisages the Prime Minister briefing on-the-record and not unattributably.

I have no doubt that the Prime Minister will accept Mr. Ingham's advice on this matter.

(C.D. POWELL)

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

JKRAPB

Se.

MB

c: Mr Murray

MR POWELL

UNELCO

MEETING WITH BRITISH PRESS IN PEKING

I can well understand Hong Kong's concern to get Hong Kong journalists into a press conference in Peking, but the Prime Minister's chief concern is to get a good press in the UK. And she is to give an open press conference in Hong Kong on December 21.

I think the best way of proceeding is for the Prime Minister to see British correspondents (resident and visiting) at the residence and for Chris Meyer and I to brief the Hong Kong press separately in the Amenities Hall. Given different time schedules, it will however be necessary to brief the Hong Kong media earlier in the day.

I would envisage the Prime Minister briefing on the record and not unattributably so the question of Hong Kong observance of rules would not arise.

But to admit 70 Hong Kong journalists to a briefing by the Prime Minister would entirely change its character.

I am not attracted to the idea of a pool for Hong Kong journalists in Peking. I think that would create a worse situation.

BERNARD INGHAM
10 December 1984

CONFIDENTIAL

Revised
You will have
views on this.
(will pass them
on.)
C

GRS 280

CONFIDENTIAL
FROM PEKING 070852Z DEC 84
TO PRIORITY FCO
TELNO 2919 OF 7/12/84
INFO PRIORITY HONG KONG

YOUR TELNO 1438; PARAGRAPH 4; PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT;
MEETING WITH BRITISH PRESS

1. THE PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH BRITISH CORRESPONDENTS IN PEKING (PRESUMABLY BOTH RESIDENT AND VISITING) WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY HAVE TO TAKE PLACE ON THE EVENING OF 19 DECEMBER AFTER THE WELCOMING BANQUET (THOUGH THIS MIGHT WELL COINCIDE WITH YOUR INFORMAL MEETING WITH WU XUEQIAN). THE TWO POSSIBLE VENUES ARE THE PRIME MINISTER'S GUEST HOUSE AT THE DIMOYUTAN AND THE RESIDENCE. THEY ARE EQUALLY CONVENIENT FOR THE PRESS. SINCE THE PRIME MINISTER MAY WISH TO MEET THE PRESS ON 'BRITISH TERRITORY' AND MAY IN ANY CASE INTEND TO HOLD CONFIDENTIAL DISCUSSIONS IN THE CHANCERY LATER ON, THE RESIDENCE WOULD SEEM TO BE THE BETTER CHOICE.

2. WE MUST NOT FORGET HONG KONG CORRESPONDENTS IN MAKING PRESS ARRANGEMENTS. THEY WOULD PROBABLY RESENT BEING EXCLUDED FROM THE PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING AND THIS COULD GET THE VISIT TO HONG KONG NEXT DAY OFF TO A BAD START. BUT GIVEN THE NUMBER INVOLVED (AROUND 70), IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO INCLUDE THEM ALL, EVEN IF THIS WERE THOUGHT TO BE DESIRABLE.

3. TWO POSSIBLE WAYS OF BRIEFING THE HONG KONG CORRESPONDENTS ARE:-

(A) IF THEY CAN BE PERSUADED TO ORGANISE A POOL FOR THE VISIT, TO INVITE POOL MEMBERS TO THE MEETING WITH THE PRIME MINISTER,

(B) TO ORGANISE A SEPARATE BRIEFING FOR THE HONG KONG PRESS IN THE EMBASSY AMENITIES HALL, GIVEN BY THE HEAD OF NEWS DEPARTMENT.

IF THE PRIME MINISTER'S PURPOSE IN MEETING THE PRESS IS PRIMARILY PRESENTATIONAL, OPTION (A) WOULD BE FEASIBLE. IF, HOWEVER, SHE PLANS TO GIVE A SUBSTANTIVE UNATTRIBUTABLE BRIEFING, WE SEE MERIT

CONFIDENTIAL

1/12

CONFIDENTIAL

IN OPTION (B); WE HAVE DOUBT ABOUT THE ABILITY OF THE HONG KONG PRESS TO ABIDE BY THE RULES OF SUCH AN EXERCISE.

4. THE GOVERNOR WILL NO DOUBT WISH TO COMMENT.

THIS TELEGRAM
WAS NOT
ADVANCED

EVA

FUTURE OF HONG KONG

LIMITED
HD/NEWS D
HD/HKD
HD/FED
HD/PLANNING STAFF
HD/PUSD
DEP HD/PUSD
RESEARCH D (MR WALKER)
PS
PS/LADY YOUNG
PS/MR LUCE
PS/PUS
MR DEREK THOMAS
SIR W HARDING
MR GOODALL
MR WILSON
SIR J FREELAND

COPIES TO:-

BUCKINGHAM PALACE
PS/LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL
PS/HOME SECRETARY
PS/CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER
PS/LORD PRIVY SEAL
PS/SECRETARY FOR TRADE & INDUSTRY

COPIES TO:- (VIA ADR)

MR ROBERTS NEWS D
MR FIPOOT LEGAL ADVISERS
MR BURROWS LEGAL ADVISERS
MR POWELL NO 10 DOWNING ST.
MR INGHAM NO 10 DOWNING ST.
MR MARTIN ASST STAFF CABINET OFFICE
MR CARTLEDGE CABINET OFFICE
MR COLVIN CABINET OFFICE
PS/S OF S FOR DEFENCE
PS/ATTORNEY GENERAL
SIR P CRADOCK ROOM K195
SIR P CRADOCK NO 10 DOWNING ST.
MR KELLY TREASURY

CONFIDENTIAL

21.12.84

HONG KONG

S. B. R. responsibility for own people's side

Questions likely to be raised at the PM's Press Conference

Ch. Govt. will answer if necessary
to the people

1. Stationing of PLA in HK - did Chinese leaders give any details?

2. Conscription - do you have any assurances that it will not be introduced here?

Understand
H.K. Govt.
of this issue.
Concern fully
taken into
account.

3. Joint Liaison Group - will there be any Hong Kong representation?

Ch. Govt. - not suggested that there would be

4. BDMC status after 1997 - do you have details of timing and issue of the new passports and of their form?

5. Drafting of the Basic Law - what form will consultations take?

"Soviet" open on wide basis

6. Anglo/Chinese relations - What are the tangible trade and economic benefits to the United Kingdom?

7. Did you discuss with the Chinese the pace and form of democratisation that would be acceptable to China?

Matter for us - careful approach

8. Are you surprised by the contrast between Hong Kong and Peking on the reception of the agreement. No outward sign of enthusiasm in Hong Kong - a joyous atmosphere in Peking?

Overwhelming acceptance

9. Aside from verbal assurances, what positive measures will HMG take to demonstrate its commitment to Hong Kong?

Nothing in charge of admin. until 1997?
through H.K. post.

10. Were consultations with Exco always smooth? There have been reports of one Exco member threatening to resign over the agreement.

11. If you had to name one reservation or doubt about the agreement, which one would you single out as most worrying?

12. 'Harvey Stockwin' type questions.

a. Sell-out.

b. Can't trust Communism.

c. HMG conned by Peking.

- Neither side based on the
- Done in eyes of world

d. No guarantee against upheavals in China after Deng's death.

e. No amount of sincerity in Peking will prevent cadres from interfering in Hong Kong's affairs.

Delayed agreement will
delayed

13. Briefing