

SECRET

Prime Minister

41

As you know, I had the same thought independently. Are you prepared to extend the circle in the way suggested by the cabinet secretary?  
A.J.C. 26/10

Ref. A09848

MR COLES ✓

You sent us a copy of your letter of 13 October to Mr Holmes of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, saying that the Prime Minister did not wish reports on her discussions with Chinese leaders and subsequent diplomatic exchanges to be made available to those concerned in the Assessments Staff and other representatives of the JIC, including the intelligence agencies and the Ministry of Defence.

2. I do of course understand the Prime Minister's reluctance to extend the circulation of the records of her discussions with Chinese leaders about the future of Hong Kong. But I have to say that there is a real risk that the ability of the intelligence machinery to assess other information relating to the views of the Chinese leadership on the future of Hong Kong could be significantly affected if none of them has any knowledge of what the Chinese leadership actually said to the Prime Minister when she was there. Obviously that record would provide a sort of benchmark against which they could assess other less direct information.

3. We could reduce this danger without unduly extending the circulation, if the Prime Minister would allow us to show the record to the Head of the Assessments Staff, and to the Deputy Head of the Assessments Staff and the desk officer concerned with China. I should instruct them not to show the record to anybody else, and not to quote from it or refer to it in any assessment which they produced. In that way we could ensure that neither the record itself nor specific information derived from it went to the JIC as a whole. But I think that we need to go that far, in order to enable the assessment machinery to do its work properly.

Agreed  
MR

RA

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

25 October 1982

SECRET



SECRET

Hong Kong 43 BME



file cc: fco

10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

ASSESSMENTS RELATING TO HONG KONG

Thank you for your minute of 25 October.

The Prime Minister agrees that the records of her discussions with Chinese leaders about the future of Hong Kong may be shown to the Head of the Assessments Staff, the Deputy Head of the Assessments Staff and the desk officer concerned with China, as an aid to the production of future assessments relating to the future of Hong Kong.

I am copying this minute to John Holmes (Foreign and Commonwealth Office).

A. J. COLES

27 October 1982

SECRET

40

TOP SECRET: DELICATE SOURCE

FILE

RM



COPY NO: 2

OF 2 COPIES

10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

25 October, 1982

CX REPORTS ON HONG KONG

The Prime Minister was grateful for your letter of 22 October enclosing a summary of recent Intelligence Reports on this subject and comment on those reports. The Prime Minister found this useful and hopes that similar summaries will be made available in the future.

A. J. COLES

J.E. Holmes, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

A





The National Archives

|  |                                      |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| LETTERCODE/SERIES<br>..... <i>PREM 19</i> .....  | Date and<br>sign                     |
| PIECE/ITEM ..... <i>791</i> .....<br>(one piece/item number)   |                                      |
| Extract/Item details:<br><br><i>Letter from Holmes to Coles dated<br/>22 October 1982, with enclosures</i> |                                      |
| CLOSED FOR ..... YEARS<br>UNDER FOI EXEMPTION  |                                      |
| RETAINED UNDER SECTION 3(4)<br>OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT 1958  | <i>11 October 2012<br/>A Wayland</i> |
| TEMPORARILY RETAINED   |                                      |
| MISSING ON TRANSFER  |                                      |
| MISSING  |                                      |
| NUMBER NOT USED  |                                      |