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FM HONG KONG 220918Z NOV 82
TO PRIORITY F C O
TELEGRAM NUMBER 1357 OF 22 NOVEMBER
INFO PEKING (PERSONAL FOR AMBASSADOR)

*Mr 2/4
h-a-*

FUTURE OF HONG KONG

1. THE NATIONAL PEOPLES' CONGRESS IS DUE TO MEET IN PEKING ON 26 NOVEMBER. GIVEN THE SCALE OF CHINESE ACTIVITY IN RECENT WEEKS IT SEEMS QUITE POSSIBLE THAT THEY WILL TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE SOME REFERENCE TO THE FUTURE OF HONG KONG E.G. IN THE REPORTS ON CONSTITUTIONAL REVISION OR THE WORK OF THE GOVERNMENT WHICH WILL NO DOUBT BE MADE. IT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO HAVE THE AMBASSADOR'S COMMENTS ON WHETHER THIS IS LIKELY AND, IF SO, ON WHAT THE CHINESE MIGHT SAY.

2. IF THE CHINESE DO MAKE SUCH A REFERENCE WE WILL NEED TO DECIDE VERY QUICKLY HOW TO REACT SINCE IT WILL BE TAKEN AS AUTHORITATIVE HERE. IF, FOR EXAMPLE THEY CONFIRM THEIR INTENTION IN THE CONTEXT OF ARTICLE 30 OF THE DRAFT CONSTITUTION TO MAKE HONG KONG A SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION WITHIN CHINA, THE BEST RESPONSE MIGHT BE TO EMPHASISE THAT THE FUTURE OF THE TERRITORY IS THE SUBJECT OF THE TALKS WHICH THE PRIME MINISTER AND CHINESE LEADERS AGREED SHOULD BE HELD, AND TO DECLINE TO GO BEYOND THIS. SUCH A RESPONSE WOULD BEST BE MADE IN LONDON, AND IDEALLY QUICKLY ENOUGH FOR IT TO BE REPORTED BY THE PRESS HERE ALONG WITH THE CHINESE STATEMENT.

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FUTURE OF HONG KONG

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