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TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 795 OF 26/11/82

REPEATED FOR INFO TO IMMEDIATE HONG KONG

A.F.C. ²⁰/₁₁

HONG KONG TELS NOS 14(3 AND 1374: FUTURE OF HONG KONG

1. I THINK THIS A FAIR ANALYSIS. THE WORDING OF THE STATEMENT SUGGESTED IN PARAGRAPH 5 OF FIRST TUR WILL HOWEVER, HAVE TO BE VERY CAREFULLY CONSIDERED. WHILST WE MUST ON THE ONE HAND TRY TO DISPEL FEARS THAT THE DIPLOMATIC TALKS HAVE BECOME OF MARGINAL IMPORTANCE AND THAT THE CHINESE HAVE UNILATERALLY LAID DOWN THE FRAMEWORK FOR THE FUTURE, A FLAT STATEMENT THAT DECISIONS CANNOT BE MADE WITHOUT BRITISH AGREEMENT COULD BE PROVOCATIVE. I AM THEREFORE WARY ABOUT EMPHASISING "THAT THE FUTURE OF HONG KONG WILL REQUIRE THE AGREEMENT OF BOTH (UNDERLINED) GOVERNMENTS CONCERNED....." IF THE CHINESE WERE TO RESPOND PUBLICLY THAT IT WAS FOR THEM TO DECIDE AND FOR US TO COOPERATE OR BE DAMNED, GREAT DAMAGE WOULD BE DONE TO CONFIDENCE IN HONG KONG. IT IS NOT TO OUR ADVANTAGE, CERTAINLY AT THIS STAGE, TO PRECIPITATE A PUBLIC DEBATE.
2. I SHOULD PREFER A LESS POINTED REFERENCE ETC., TO THE WISH OF BOTH GOVERNMENTS TO AGREE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE FUTURE OF HONG KONG WHICH WILL BE TO THEIR MUTUAL ADVANTAGE AND SATISFACTION AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE INTERESTS AND WISHES OF THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG (SEMI-COLON) AND THE FACT THAT IT IS ON THESE TALKS THAT THE FUTURE WILL DEPEND.
3. SECOND TUR. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THE PERSONNEL CHANGES AT THE MFA ARE NOT THE WHOLE REASON FOR THE LONG CHINESE SILENCE. I REFERRED IN MY TEL NO 735 TO A MORE WORRYING POSSIBILITY. BUT SHORT OF THAT, IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE THAT THE CHINESE WISH TO LET US SWEAT FOR A WHILE, AS THEY PUT FURTHER PRESSURE ON US AND (AS THEY WOULD SEE IT) STRENGTHEN THEIR POSITION BY MEANS OF THEIR DIRECT CONTACTS WITH HONG KONG VISITORS, SUCH AS THE RECENT FACTORY OWNERS' DELEGATION. IF ARTICLE 30 OF THE DRAFT CONSTITUTION WERE TO BE AMENDED IN THE CURRENT NPC SESSION (MY TEL NO 786) THEY MAY ALSO WISH TO WAIT UNTIL THIS IS DONE BEFORE RESUMING CONTACT WITH US.

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