

GR 295
CONFIDENTIAL
FM PEKING 150600Z JUL 83
TO IMMEDIATE FCO
TELEGRAM NUMBER 677 OF 15 JULY
AND IMMEDIATE HONG KONG

CONFIDENTIAL

Lead in file.
MS

MY TELNO 674: FUTURE OF HONG KONG: PRESS

1. I THINK YOU SHOULD KNOW OF THE WAY IN WHICH THE PRESS WERE HANDLED DURING THE FIRST SESSION OF THE TALKS AND WHAT SPECIFICALLY WAS SAID TO THEM.

2. THERE HAS BEEN A STRICT RULE FOR SOME TIME THAT ONLY THE EMBASSY PRESS OFFICER IS AUTHORISED TO SPEAK TO JOURNALISTS. MYSELF AND THE GOVERNOR APART, NO ONE ELSE SAID A WORD TO THEM.

I TOLD THE JOURNALISTS AS A BODY AT THE AIRPORT WHEN MEETING THE GOVERNOR THAT I WAS GLAD TO SEE HIM AND WAS LOOKING FORWARD TO THE TALKS. THE GOVERNOR SAID MUCH THE SAME. SIMILARLY, ON SEEING HIM OFF I SPOKE AS IN THE AGREED COMMUNIQUE.

3. THE PRESS OFFICER MADE THE FOLLOWING POINTS, WITHOUT AMPLIFICATION, IN THE COURSE OF THE SESSION:

(A) COMPOSITION OF THE BRITISH DELEGATION (THE CHINESE HAVING RELEASED THEIRS):

(B) DURATION OF MEETINGS (TO SCOTCH RUMOURS THAT THE TALKS HAD BEEN CURTAILED OWING TO DISAGREEMENTS):

(C) THE TALKS WERE BETWEEN THE BRITISH AND CHINESE GOVERNMENTS:

(D) THE BRITISH (AND PRESUMABLY THE CHINESE) DELEGATIONS WOULD BE DRAWING ON THE FULL RANGE OF INFORMATION AND EXPERTISE AVAILABLE TO THEM ON HONG KONG.

NOTHING MORE WHATEVER WAS SAID, EXCEPT THE TEXTS OF THE AGREED CONCLUDING STATEMENT AND QUOTE NO COMMENT UNQUOTE.

4. AS FAR AS WE KNOW, THERE WAS NO JOURNALIST IN PEKING CLAIMING TO REPRESENT THE GUARDIAN, AND IF THERE HAD BEEN ANY STRINGERS PASSING INFORMATION TO GITTINGS WE WOULD HAVE EXPECTED THE STORY TO HAVE ALSO SURFACED IN THEIR OWN PAPERS. WE HAVE NOT SEEN A REPEAT ELSEWHERE. I SHOULD THEREFORE BE GRATEFUL IF YOU WOULD CONSIDER APPROACHING THE GUARDIAN TO SEEK CLARIFICATION ON THIS ARTICLE.

CRADOCK

[REPEATED AS REQUESTED]

FUTURE OF HONG KONG

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ED/PLANNING STAFF
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