

48

/PUS
PS/MR LUCE
/MR DONALD
HD/HKD
HD/FED

COPY TO:
MR COLES, No. 10 DOWNING ST
Mr Roberts News D

SECRET

IMMEDIATE

FM PEKING 120651Z DEC 83

ADVANCE COPY

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 1330 OF 12TH DEC 83

INFO IMMEDIATE HONG KONG

NY TELNO 1325. FUTURE OF HONG KONG: CALLS ON LEADERS.

1. IT OCCURS TO ME THAT IT WOULD BE VERY HELPFUL IN ANY DISCUSSION OVER A PROPOSED PLA PRESENCE IN HONG KONG AFTER 1997 IF I COULD INDICATE THAT WE WERE CONSIDERING THE POSSIBILITY OF WITHDRAWING BRITISH TROOPS FROM HONG KONG WELL BEFORE 1997. THIS WOULD COUNTER ANY CHINESE ARGUMENT THAT IF BRITISH TROOPS ARE STATIONED IN HONG KONG NOW THERE IS NO REASON WHY THE PLA SHOULD NOT BE STATIONED THERE AFTER 1997. IT WOULD ALSO LEAD NATURALLY TO A STATEMENT OF OUR INTENTION TO BUILD UP AN INTERNAL SECURITY FORCE IN HONG KONG TO HANDLE SECURITY THERE WITHOUT ANY OUTSIDE PRESENCE. IT WOULD OBVIOUSLY NOT BE THE FIRST POINT I MADE ON THE TOPIC BUT IT WOULD BE SOMETHING TO DRAW ON IF THE DISCUSSION REQUIRED IT.

2. I REALISE THIS IS RUNNING VERY FAST. BUT THE SOONER WE CAN PREVENT THE IDEA OF A PLA PRESENCE IN HONG KONG TAKING ROOT THE BETTER.

ms

CRADOCK

NNNN

FUTURE OF HONG KONG ADVANCE COPIES ¹⁰

47

PS
PS/PUS
PS/MR LUCE
MR DONALD
HD/HKD
HD/FED

78

COPY TO:
MR COLES, No. 10 DOWNING ST
Mr Roberts, News D.

~~RESIDENT CLERK~~

GR 950
SECRET
FM PEKING 090930Z DEC 83
TO IMMEDIATE FCO
TELEGRAM NUMBER 1325 OF 9 DECEMBER
INFO IMMEDIATE HONG KONG

IMMEDIATE

ADVANCE COPY

Lead in full.
A.S.C. 9.12

FUTURE OF HONG KONG: CALLS ON LEADERS

1. I ASKED YAO GUANG AT DINNER LAST NIGHT ABOUT MY REQUEST TO CALL ON CHINESE LEADERS. HE TOLD ME THAT A CALL ON DENG XIAOPING WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO ARRANGE, BUT THAT THEY WERE ARRANGING FOR ME TO SEE WU XUEQIAN, JI PENGFEI AND ZHAO ZIYANG (AND INCIDENTALLY CHEN MUHUA). I SHOULD THINK THAT THESE CALLS WILL PROBABLY COME IN THE ABOVE ORDER IN THE LAST FEW DAYS BEFORE I LEAVE.

mf

2. THESE CALLS WILL REPRESENT AN UNUSUAL OPPORTUNITY TO PUT OUR VIEWS DIRECTLY TO PEOPLE IN DECISION-MAKING POSITIONS, AND WE SHOULD MAKE FULL USE OF IT. I HAVE THE FOLLOWING SUGGESTIONS AS TO THE LINE WHICH I SHOULD TAKE:

(A) I SHOULD NOTE WITH PLEASURE THE PROGRESS MADE IN THE LAST THREE ROUNDS. I SHOULD REFER BACK TO THE PRIME MINISTER'S MESSAGE AND REITERATE OUR WISH, PROVIDED WE CAN REACH AGREEMENT ON AN ACCEPTABLE SOLUTION, TO GIVE OUR FULL COOPERATION.

(B) I WOULD SAY THAT THE IDEA OF MAINTAINING A CAPITALIST HONG KONG AS A SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION WITHIN A SOCIALIST COUNTRY WAS A TOTALLY NEW CONCEPT. THE TASK AHEAD WAS COMPLEX AND DIFFICULT. THE AGREED BASIS FOR OUR PRESENT DISCUSSIONS SHOULD ENSURE THAT CHINESE REQUIREMENTS OF PRINCIPLE WOULD BE MET. BUT THERE REMAINED IMPORTANT QUESTIONS STILL UNSETTLED. THEY THREATENED NO PRINCIPLE. BUT THEY WOULD BE CRITICAL FOR THE ECONOMIC SUCCESS OR OTHERWISE OF THE ENTERPRISE. THE BRITISH SIDE BELIEVED THAT WITH ITS EXPERIENCE OF HONG KONG IT COULD BE OF VERY GREAT HELP IN GIVING THE BEST POSSIBLE CHANCE OF SUCCESS. WE THEREFORE HOPED THAT THE CHINESE SIDE WOULD LISTEN SERIOUSLY TO OUR IDEAS AND DUGGESTIONS AND TAKE ACCOUNT OF THEM IN FORMULATING THEIR PLANS AND THE BASIC LAW.

(C) THE MOST FUNDAMENTAL POINT TO US WOULD SEEM TO BE TO MAKE ONLY THE CHANGES THAT WERE ESSENTIAL TO MEET THE FUNDAMENTAL PREMISE THAT SOVEREIGNTY AND THE POWER OF ADMINISTRATION SHOULD REVERT TO CHINA. IN ALL OTHER RESPECTS THE PRESENT SYSTEMS IN HONG KONG SHOULD CONTINUE AS UNCHANGED AS POSSIBLE. IT WAS INCONTESTABLE THAT THINGS WORKED WELL NOW. CONTINUITY WAS THE BEST GUARANTEE OF STABILITY AND PROSPERITY AND WOULD ACCORD ENTIRELY WITH THE CHINESE GUIDELINE THAT THE CURRENT SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC SYSTEMS AND THE LIFESTYLE WOULD REMAIN UNCHANGED.

~~AND ECONOMIC SYSTEMS AND THE LIFESTYLE WOULD REMAIN UNCHANGED.~~

(D) IN PURSUANCE OF THIS I WOULD STRESS THAT THE CONTINUITY OF THE CIVIL SERVICE WAS A CENTRAL ELEMENT. SO FAR AS POSSIBLE EXISTING CIVIL SERVANTS WHETHER LOCAL OR OVERSEAS SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO REMAIN AT THEIR POSTS AFTER 1997 AND TO COMPLETE THEIR CAREERS IN THE NORMAL WAY. ADVISERS WOULD NOT SUFFICE. OFFICIALS HAD TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR ACTS. THEY WOULD BE UNLIKELY TO STAY ON IF THEY COULD ONLY HOPE TO BECOME ADVISERS. AS OUR STATEMENT OF 28 NOVEMBER MADE CLEAR THE LOYALTIES OF CIVIL SERVANTS WOULD OF COURSE BE TO THE GOVERNMENT OF THE SAR. THE LATTER SHOULD ALSO BE ABLE TO RECRUIT PERSONS OF PROFESSIONAL SKILL AND ABILITY AFTER 1997 IN ANY WAY WHICH SEEMED BEST TO IT.

(E) CHANGES TO THE LEGAL SYSTEM SHOULD BE KEPT TO THE ABSOLUTE MINIMUM REQUIRED BY THE RETURN OF SOVEREIGNTY AND THE POWER OF ADMINISTRATION TO CHINA. THE LEGAL SYSTEM WAS THE FUNDAMENTAL BASIS FOR ALL THE SYSTEMS IN HONG KONG AND CHANGES TO IT WOULD AFFECT EVERY ASPECT OF LIFE IN THE TERRITORY. CHANGES IN THIS AREA WOULD AFFECT THE CONFIDENCE BOTH OF INVESTORS AND RESIDENTS.

(F) I WOULD EXPRESS CONCERN ABOUT THE REFERENCES DURING THE LAST ROUND TO STATIONING OF TROOPS IN HONG KONG. WE DID NOT DISPUTE THE RIGHT OF THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT TO STATION ITS TROOPS IN ANY PART OF CHINA THAT IT CONSIDERED FIT. NEVERTHELESS, THIS WAS AN EXTREMELY SENSITIVE MATTER IN HONG KONG. A DECISION TO STATION TROOPS IN KONG AFTER 1997 WOULD BE SEEN AS FATALLY IMPAIRING THE AUTONOMY OF THE REGION, AND WOULD GIVE THE APPEARANCE NOT OF A PEACEFUL TRANSITION TO A NEW STATUS, BUT AN IMPOSED SETTLEMENT. I WOULD CONSEL THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT TO ACT WITH GREAT PRUDENCE AND RESTRAINT IN THIS RESPECT.

(G) I HOPED THAT IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE NOW TO MAKE FASTER PROGRESS. GIVEN THE COMPLEXITY OF THE ISSUES, ADEQUATE TIME WOULD BE NEEDED BUT I WAS CONFIDENT THAT WILL GOODWILL A SOLUTION COULD BE REACHED.

3. THESE ARE THE POINTS WHICH IMMEDIATELY OCCUR TO ME. THERE MAY BE OTHERS WHICH OCCUR TO YOU AND THE GOVERNOR. THERE IS BOUND TO BE CONSIDERABLE REPETITION SINCE I THINK THAT I SHALL BE OBLIGED TO MAKE MUCH THE SAME POINTS TO ALL THREE OF THE LEADERS ON WHOM I CALL, I DO NOT THINK THAT THIS MATTERS. SOME MODIFICATIONS MAY BE NEEDED IN THE LIGHT OF EXPERIENCE OF THE FIRST CALL OR CALLS.

4. IN SPEAKING TO ZHAO I HOPE I COULD CONVEY THE PRIME MINISTER'S GOOD WISHES TO HIM AND DENG AND INDICATE THAT WHAT I WAS SAYING HAD HER APPROVAL.

CRADOCK

NNNN

The most difficult thing is acceptability to the people of Hong Kong and how we raise that point so vital to us. If I were a member in HK I would be getting worried that we were not involved

is the negotiations not