

Mr Clift

PK/Sir P Cradock  
ls/ps

Subject to the views of  
those expert in Parliamentary procedure & knowledgeable about  
what is likely to go down best with Mrs. The sequence of  
events in 4 looks good to  
me.

FROM: R D CLIFT, HKD  
DATE: 8 March 1984

PS/PUS PUS

AMM  $\frac{Y}{J}$

cc: PS  
PS/Mr Luce  
Sir P Cradock  
Mr Donald  
Mr Butler, Parliamentary Unit

HONG KONG: STRATEGY AND TIMETABLE

- A 1. In your minute of 1 March to Mr Hum you noted the concern of Mr Renton, the PUS and Sir P Cradock that any speech made by the Secretary of State in Hong Kong should be brought to the attention of Parliament at the same time.
- B 2. I attach a factual minute by Mr Butler of the Parliamentary Unit, which sets out the procedural options available. The precedent of the memorandum on the diplomatic moves to end the Falklands War is covered in paragraph 3(e).
- 3. You will know from separate minuting that the exact timing of the Secretary of State's visit to Peking and Hong Kong is still under consideration: revised planning is now in hand for a visit in the week of 15 April, which falls during the Parliamentary Recess. Ministers have already given some thought to the Parliamentary problems that this will pose (see PS/Mr Luce's minute of 5 March). We are submitting separately on the Secretary of State's wish to use opportunities in March to lift the veil at least partially.
- C 4. As regards the mechanics of a possible statement in April, the idea of a statement to be made by an FCO Minister as soon as Parliament reconvenes could be combined with the device of depositing papers in the Library of each House (Mr Butler's option (e)) to give the following sequence of actions:
  - (i) The Secretary of State would make his statement in Hong Kong.
  - (ii) The text of his statement would simultaneously be deposited in the Library of each House. (Mr Butler confirms that this can be done even if Parliament is in Recess). To ensure exact simultaneity and to avoid being "scooped" by the British morning press, the Secretary of State's statement should be made in the late afternoon Hong Kong time (the beginning of the working day in Britain).
  - (iii) An FCO Minister would make a statement on the first day after the Recess, probably Wednesday 25 April, in which he would refer to the Secretary of State's statement and the fact that it had been deposited in the Library of the House. (On current plans the

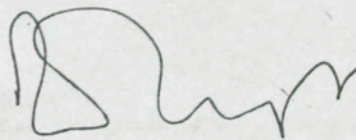
/Secretary



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Secretary of State would himself still be in the Far East).

5. I believe, from manuscript minuting between yourself and the PUS, that this proposal accords with the PUS's own view. I do not think we can be any more precise about mechanics until there is more certainty about the Secretary of State's plans. It seems clear however that procedures exist which would allow Parliament to be effectively informed of a statement made by the Secretary of State in Hong Kong.



8 March 1984

R D Clift  
Hong Kong Department