

29 ^{calls} ~~12~~ ②

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Prime Minister

London SW1A 2AH

17 July 1984

Agree minor
amendments as
marked on attached
text? Agree not

Dear Charles,

no refer to timing
of setting up of the Joint Liaison Group?

Future of Hong Kong: Visit to Hong Kong and Peking by the
Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary

CDD

17/7

Thank you for your letter of 14 July about the draft message from the Prime Minister to Zhao Ziyang.

Mr Luce discussed the draft text with EXCO in Hong Kong on 14 July. EXCO were broadly content with the text, but a number of members suggested that it would be inappropriate to refer to the word 'powers' in paragraph 5 of the draft message, since it is our intention that the group should have no powers as such. The Foreign Secretary thinks that this is a reasonable point and suggests that the sentence should read instead: 'discuss instead its composition and functions, to see whether'.

Sir S Y Chung and a number of members also suggested that the message should include a reference to the timing of the setting up of a joint group, both in relation to its initial establishment, and to the possibility of its continuation after 1997. These are certainly matters which the Foreign Secretary will try to explore with the Chinese while he is in Peking, but such exploration will need to be very delicately handled to avoid giving any appearance of retreating from the agreement which we have already given to the establishment of a joint group after the conclusion of the agreement. A bald reference to timing in the message without any further clarification could in his view lead to the Chinese drawing the wrong conclusion and thus diminish the chances of the message having a beneficial effect. He therefore thinks that it would be better to make no reference to the timing of the establishment of the group in the text of the message. He would however propose to reassure EXCO that he does intend to discuss both these aspects of timing with the Chinese during the visit.

/Following

S E C R E T



Following the meeting with EXCO, the Governor has made one further recommendation relating to the text of the draft message. He proposes that all references to 'joint group' in the text should be amended to 'joint liaison group'. This reflects a point which the Chinese have accepted in the negotiations. The Governor rightly suggests that we should pocket the concessions and we therefore propose that amendments in this sense should be made to the text.

Yours ever,

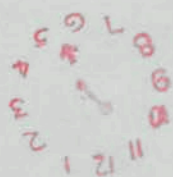
Len Appleyard

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S E C R E T

Hong Kong : Pulau A 15



17 JUL 1984