

FUTURE OF HONG KONG

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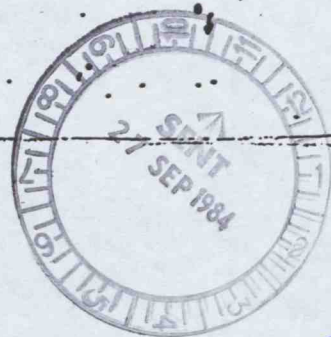
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TELEGRAM NUMBER 3058 OF 27 SEPTEMBER

INFO IMMEDIATE PEKING

ROUTINE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT OFFICE LONDON, HONG KONG GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES WASHINGTON, NEW YORK, BRUSSELS AND GENEVA.

FUTURE OF HONG KONG : MEDIA COVERAGE.

SUMMARY:

1. BLANKET COVERAGE IN ALL MEDIA. COMMENT IS GENERALLY FAVOURABLE. PUBLIC DEMAND FOR WHITE PAPER IS OVERWHELMING.

NEWS COVERAGE:

2. THE MASS MEDIA ACCORDED BLANKET COVERAGE TO THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE WHITE PAPER, WITH 15 CHINESE PAPERS, BOTH ENGLISH PAPERS AND THE ENGLISH EDITION OF TA KUNG PAO PUBLISHING THE FULL TEXT. THE PRO-TAIPEI HONG KONG TIMES DID NOT PUBLISH THE TEXT. MANY PAPERS CARRIED SPECIAL OR SOUVENIR EDITIONS INCLUDING COLOUR PHOTOS OF THE INITIALING CEREMONY. TV AND RADIO BROADCAST LIVE THE INITIALING CEREMONY, THE GOVERNORS SPEECH TO LEGCO AND THE SECRETARY OF STATE'S CONFERENCE IN NEW YORK. REGULAR PROGRAMMES WERE REPLACED BY SPECIAL REPORTS, INTERVIEWS AND PANEL DISCUSSIONS.

3. SEVERAL PAPERS INCLUDING THE ECONOMIC JOURNAL (INDEPENDENT) LED THEIR FRONT PAGES WITH THE SECRETARY OF STATES PRESS CONFERENCE IN NEW YORK. SING TAO JIH PAO (INDEPENDENT) HEADLINED HIS POINT THAT THE JOINT DECLARATION WAS A FORMAL INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENT. MANY PAPERS ALSO GAVE PROMINENCE TO THE STATEMENT BY FOREIGN MINISTER WU.



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4. LEFT-WING PRESS: THE PAPERS LED WITH NEWS OF THE INITIALLING, CARRYING FRONT PAGE HEADLINES STRESSING A SATISFACTORY SETTLEMENT OF THE HONG KONG ISSUE. TA KUNG PAO NOTED THE HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE AGREEMENT AND THAT THE ONE NATION TWO SYSTEMS CONCEPT ENSURED HONG KONG'S PROSPERITY AND STABILITY.

5. NEGATIVE REACTION: THE PRO-TAIPEI PAPERS WERE MOSTLY OPPOSED TO THE AGREEMENT STATING THAT TAIWAN WOULD NOT RECOGNISE IT. THE ONLY PAPER TO PICK UP YESTERDAY'S LEAK BY THE EXPRESS OF THE TEXT WAS THE PRO-TAIPEI ORIENTAL DAILY. THE EXPRESS CARRIED A CORRECTIVE STATEMENT FROM GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SERVICES BUT STILL MAINTAINED IT CARRIED THE FULL TEXT.

6. FOREIGN REACTION: SING TAO JIH PAO QUOTED U.S. SECRETARY OF STATE SCHULTZ AS WELCOMING THE AGREEMENT. A U.N. SPOKESMAN WAS QUOTED IN MING PAO AS SAYING THE U.N. HAD RECORDED IN WRITTEN FORM THE JOINT DECLARATION AND THE SECRETARY OF STATE'S PRESS CONFERENCE.

7. LOCAL REACTIONS: THE MAJORITY OF UMELCO MEMBERS WERE REPORTED TO WELCOME THE JOINT DECLARATION. BOTH PRO-CHINA AND OTHER LOCAL BUSINESS ORGANIZATIONS BELIEVED THE JOINT DECLARATION WOULD STABILIZE LOCAL PEOPLE'S CONFIDENCE. THE INDEPENDENT HONG KONG DAILY NEWS REPORTED SATISFACTION AMONG NEW TERRITORY PEOPLE ON THE PROVISIONS OF LAND LEASES. OPTIMISM WAS EXPRESSED BY THE GENERAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, THE HK AND SHANGHAI BANK, THE CHINESE MANUFACTURERS' ASSOCIATION, THE FEDERATION OF HK INDUSTRIES AND THE HEUNG YEE KUK AMONGST MANY OTHERS. NONETHELESS SOME RESERVATIONS WERE EXPRESSED BY HU JUREN OF THE INDEPENDENT PAI SHING BI-WEEKLY, THE CHRISTIAN INDUSTRIAL COMMITTEE AND POLITICAL COMMENTATOR T L TSIM AMONGST OTHERS.

8. SEVERAL PAPERS HAD CARRIED OUT STREET POLLS ON THE JOINT DECLARATION. 90 PERCENT OF THE INTERVIEWEES OF ORIENTAL DAILY NEWS WERE OPTIMISTIC, ALTHOUGH MORE THAN HALF OF THEM STILL WORRIED ABOUT POLITICAL INSTABILITY IN CHINA.

9. ASSESSMENT OFFICE: ALL LEADING PAPERS, INCLUDING THE COMMUNIST WEN WEI PO, PUBLISHED THE ADVERTISEMENT PLACED BY THE ASSESSMENT OFFICE.

10. PUBLIC DEMAND: THERE WAS A MASSIVE RESPONSE TO THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE WHITE PAPER THROUGHOUT HONG KONG AND SUPPLIES WERE EXHAUSTED WITHIN 90 MINUTES AT SOME DISTRICT OFFICES LAST NIGHT.

627000 CHINESE COPIES AND 205000 ENGLISH COPIES HAVE ALREADY BEEN DISTRIBUTED. AN ADDITIONAL PRINT RUN OF 300000 CHINESE AND 550000 ENGLISH COPIES HAS BEEN ORDERED. DEMAND WAS FAR HEAVIER THAN ANTICIPATED. DISTRICT OFFICES REPORTED THAT THE PROVISIONS ON LAND AND AVIATION WERE GENERALLY WELL RECEIVED. NCNA WAS ALSO DISTRIBUTING LARGE NUMBERS OF COPIES OF THE AGREEMENT, INCLUDING THEIR OWN ISSUES OF THE WHITE PAPER IN CHINESE.



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#### COMMENTARIES.

11. INDEPENDENT PRESS: MOST OF THE INDEPENDENT PAPERS FELT THE AGREEMENT WAS ACCEPTABLE TO HONG KONG PEOPLE. SING TAO JIH PAO SAID THAT PEOPLE HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO ACCEPT THE AGREEMENT AND THAT THEY MUST ACCEPT THE NEW SITUATION AND ADOPT A PRACTICAL ATTITUDE IN FUTURE. FINANCIAL DAILY SAID THE JOINT DECLARATION WAS MORE DETAILED THAN EXPECTED, AND BELIEVED THAT CHINA HAD MADE CONCESSIONS TO WIN THE TRUST OF HK PEOPLE. WAH KIU YAT PAO URGED PEOPLE TO AIR THEIR VIEWS WHICH WOULD BE USEFUL IN SHAPING THE BASIC LAW. THE PAPER NOTED THAT THE NEXT 13 YEARS WAS CRUCIAL. MING PAO SAID THE MAJOR PROBLEM NOW WAS TO ENSURE THAT THE STIPULATIONS IN THE AGREEMENT WOULD BE IMPLEMENTED IN THE NEXT 63 YEARS. THE PAPER'S EDITORIAL WAS HEADLINED 'HK PEOPLE HAVE GOT WHAT THEY WANT.' THE HONG KONG ECONOMIC JOURNAL SHARED THIS VIEW AND PROPOSED THAT UMELCO SHOULD ASK THE GOVERNMENT TO SET UP A DEPARTMENT SIMILAR TO THE CHINESE PROPOSED JOINT LIAISON GROUP. SOME PAPERS WERE MORE CAUTIOUSLY OPTIMISTIC, INCLUDING THE SCMP WHICH SAID THAT WHILE THE AGREEMENT DID NOT ANSWER EVERY QUESTION IT ANTICIPATED MOST OF THE MAJOR ONES. THE BEST THING NOW WAS TO MAKE THE MOST OF THE SITUATION. THE POST ALSO PRAISED ALL WHO HAD CONTRIBUTED TO THE AGREEMENT. THE STANDARD IN A FRONT PAGE EDITORIAL WAS WELL PLEASED WITH THE AGREEMENT AND BELIEVED THAT HONG KONG RESIDENTS COULD NOW FACE THE FUTURE WITH CONFIDENCE BASED ON REALITY.

12. COMMUNIST PRESS: ALL LEFT-WING PAPERS WELCOMED THE AGREEMENT AND BELIEVED THAT HONG KONG WOULD PROSPER IN FUTURE. WHILE ACCEPTING THAT THERE MIGHT BE DIFFICULTIES AHEAD, TA KUNG PAO NOTED CHINA'S RECORD IN OBSERVING INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS. IT ALSO CALLED ON TAIWANESE ELEMENTS IN HK TO STAY TO BUILD A MORE PROSPEROUS HONG KONG. WEN WAI PAO SAID THAT WITH FUTURE REFORMS IN HONG KONG'S ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM MORE AND MORE ABLE HONG KONG PEOPLE WOULD COME FORWARD TO TAKE UP POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND WORK TOWARDS HONG KONG'S PROSPERITY. MING PAO (INDEPENDENT) PUBLISHER LOUIS CHA HAD AN ARTICLE PRINTED IN THE PEOPLE'S DAILY SAYING THAT KNOWLEDGEABLE PEOPLE HAD BEGUN TO UNDERSTAND THE FAR-SIGHTED 'ONE COUNTRY, TWO SYSTEMS' PROPOSITION.

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13. PRO-TAIPEI PRESS: THESE PAPERS WERE MUCH LESS FAVOURABLE IN COMMENTS. HK TIMES URGED HK PEOPLE TO UNITE TO SAVE THEMSELVES KUNG SHEUNG DAILY NEWS SAID THE AGREEMENT FAILED TO ALLAY FEARS OF "PEKING PEOPLE RULING HK". IT ALSO POINTED OUT THAT THE SAR GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT COMMAND THE PLA TROOPS TO BE STATIONED HERE, AND FORESAW POTENTIAL DISPUTES BETWEEN THE TWO.

14. TV AND RADIO ALL CARRIED MANY INTERVIEWS AND PANEL DISCUSSION ACROSS THE SOCIAL SPECTRUM. THE GENERAL RESPONSE IN BOTH ELECTRONIC AND PRINT MEDIA FROM ACADEMICS, PROFESSIONALS, CIVIL SERVICE UNIONS, UBRAN COUNCIL AND DISTRICT BOARD MEMBERS AND INTEREST GROUP LEADERS WAS OVERWHELMINGLY FAVOURABLE.

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