



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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TUESDAY, JANUARY 16, 1990

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FOREIGN SECRETARY TALKS OF BRITISH PRESENCE IN HK

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THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS, MR DOUGLAS HURD, SAID THIS (TUESDAY) MORNING HE HOPED THAT IT WOULD NOT BE TOO LONG BEFORE SOME DECISIVE PROGRESS WAS MADE CONCERNING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A BRITISH CONSULATE GENERAL IN HONG KONG.

SPEAKING TO REPORTERS AFTER ATTENDING A MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, MR HURD SAID: "IT'S GOING TO BE VERY IMPORTANT TO HAVE A SUBSTANTIAL BRITISH PRESENCE IN HONG KONG, BOTH FOR THE PROTECTION OF BRITISH CITIZENS AND ON THE COMMERCIAL SIDE."

HE SAID IT WAS AN IMPORTANT MATTER "THAT WE'VE GOT TO GET ON WITH".

THE FOREIGN SECRETARY POINTED OUT THAT WHILE DISCUSSIONS IN THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL WERE CONFIDENTIAL, A WIDE RANGE OF MATTERS THAT WERE OF INTEREST TO HONG KONG WERE DISCUSSED WHEN HE ATTENDED THIS MORNING.

"BUT IT WON'T SURPRISE YOU THAT CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENTS, THE BOAT PEOPLE AND THE NATIONALITY WERE AMONG THE SUBJECTS WHICH CAME UP," MR HURD SAID.

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UK CONTRIBUTES \$148M MORE TO VBP CENTRES

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THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT HAS MADE AN EXTRA CONTRIBUTION OF \$148 MILLION TOWARDS THE RUNNING OF VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE CENTRES IN HONG KONG. THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS, MR DOUGLAS HURD, SAID TODAY (TUESDAY).

SPEAKING TO REPORTERS AFTER VISITING A REFUGEE CENTRE AT PILLAR POINT AND A VBP CENTRE AT HEI LING CHAU, MR HURD SAID THAT FINANCING WAS NOT A KEY PART OF THE BOAT PEOPLE PROBLEM.

"THE MAIN PROBLEM IS THERE ARE TOO MANY PEOPLE HERE IN TOO SMALL A SPACE," HE SAID.

"IT JUST REDOUBLES ONE'S WISH TO CLEAR THE CAMPS AS SOON AS ONE CAN AND PREVENT OTHER COMING. PREVENT THE CAMPS FILLING AND RE-FILLING," HE ADDED.

ASKED FOR HIS RESPONSE TO A SPECIFIC CRITICISM BY AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL OF THE SCREENING PROCESS AND AN ALLEGATION THAT REFUGEES WERE BEING SENT BACK TO VIETNAM, MR HURD SAID: "I DON'T THINK THAT THAT CAN BE THE ALLEGATION BECAUSE WE HAVE, APART FROM THE VOLUNTEERS WHO ARE RETURNING ALL THE TIME OF COURSE, WE HAVE SENT BACK 51 AND I DON'T THINK AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL IS SUGGESTING THAT ANY OF THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN SENT BACK ARE REFUGEES."

/"THE GOVERNMENT

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"THE GOVERNMENT OF HONG KONG WILL LOOK CAREFULLY AT THE SPECIFIC POINTS IN THE AMNESTY REPORT. MANY OF THEM HAVE BEEN INVESTIGATED OF COURSE ALREADY AND FOUND TO BE WITHOUT FOUNDATION.

"BUT OBVIOUSLY IF THERE ARE SERIOUS FURTHER POINTS IN THE REPORT THEY WILL BE LOOKED AT. BUT I DON'T THINK THE SUGGESTION THAT REFUGEES HAVE BEEN SENT BACK TO VIETNAM, STANDS A MOMENT'S EXAMINATION," MR HURD SAID.

THE FOREIGN SECRETARY SAID HE WOULD LIKE TO SEE MONITORING BY THE UNHCR OF ALL THOSE WHO RETURN, BOTH VOLUNTARILY AND THOSE WHO ARE REPATRIATED.

MR HURD POINTED OUT THAT REPATRIATION WAS NOT AN AGREEABLE BUSINESS. "AND NO ONE WHO ACTUALLY HAS TO DO IT HERE PRETENDS THAT IT IS, BUT IT IS BETTER AND MORE HUMANE, IN MY VIEW, THAN KEEPING PEOPLE HERE INDEFINITELY WHO HAVE SHOWN NOT TO BE REFUGEES.

"IT IS ALSO VERY IMPORTANT TO SHOW PEOPLE WHO MIGHT NOW BE PLANNING IN VIETNAM TO COME HERE, IN THE COMPLETELY FALSE BELIEF THAT COMING HERE LEADS TO RESETTLEMENT IN THE WEST, IT IS IMPORTANT TO SHOW THEM THAT THAT IS NOT SO," HE SAID.

"AND THAT THE TRAFFIC WHICH IS BUILDING UP, A TRADE ONE COULD ALMOST SAY WHICH IS BUILDING IN THIS BUSINESS, IS A FALSE ONE AND LEADS TO NOTHING EXCEPT DISAPPOINTMENT.

"MOST OF THE SMALL NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO HAVE ARRIVED FROM VIETNAM IN RECENT MONTHS HAVE COME TO A LARGE EXTENT, OVERLAND THROUGH CHINA, ON JUST THE LAST IMMEDIATE STRETCH BY WATER.

"THIS IS NOW QUITE SUBSTANTIALLY ORGANISED AND NO DOUBT SOME PEOPLE ARE MAKING MONEY OUT OF IT. IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT IT SHOULD BE UNDERSTOOD IN VIETNAM BY PEOPLE WHO MIGHT BE TEMPTED TO TAKE THAT ROAD, THAT IT DOES NOT LEAD TO RESETTLEMENT OR TO A BETTER LIFE FORTH," HE SAID.

"IT'S A CRUEL DECEPTION TO PRETEND OTHERWISE," MR HURD SAID.

THE FOREIGN SECRETARY ALSO POINTED OUT THAT THERE WAS NO QUESTION OF HONG KONG DOING WHAT SOME OTHER COUNTRIES DO, WHICH WAS SIMPLY TURNING BOATS AWAY WITHOUT SCREENING.

"BUT I WOULD LIKE TO FIND SOME WAY IN WHICH ONE COULD SCREEN AND RETURN PEOPLE WHO ARE NOT REFUGEES MORE QUICKLY, BECAUSE I THINK OTHERWISE THE DANGER OF THE CAMPS REMAINING AS FULL AS THEY ARE NOW, AND PERHAPS EVEN FULLER, WOULD BE GREAT AND WE MUST TRY TO AVOID THAT," HE SAID.

MR HURD SAID BRITAIN HOPED THAT THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY, INCLUDING THE AMERICANS, WOULD ACCEPT THAT REPATRIATION AS WELL AS VOLUNTARY RETURN WERE NECESSARY.

/"THAT THEY

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"THAT THEY WILL AGREE TO MONITOR THOSE WHO RETURN, WHETHER VOLUNTEERS OR PEOPLE WHO ARE REPATRIATED, AND THAT IS THE PROPOSITION WE WILL BE PUTTING WHEN THE GENEVA MEETING IS HELD," HE SAID.

"THE AMERICANS ARE OBVIOUSLY CONSIDERING THE POSITION THEY WILL TAKE AND I HOPE THAT THEY LEAD THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY IN MAKING A MORE PRACTICAL EFFORT TO HELP HONG KONG DEAL WITH THIS PROBLEM," THE FOREIGN SECRETARY SAID.

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GOVT WELCOMES UK CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARDS VBP ACCOMMODATION

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THE GOVERNMENT TODAY (TUESDAY) WELCOMED THE CONTRIBUTIONS TOTALLING ABOUT \$148 MILLION WHICH HAD BEEN MADE BY THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT MAINLY FOR THE ACCOMMODATION OF VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS, MR DOUGLAS HURD, SPOKE OF THE CONTRIBUTIONS WHILE SPEAKING TO THE MEDIA AT THE END OF HIS VISIT TO THE HEI LING CHAU DETENTION CENTRE.

A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN SAID: "THESE ARE VERY GENEROUS CONTRIBUTIONS AND SHOULD GO A LONG WAY IN ASSISTING HONG KONG TO COPE WITH THE BOAT PEOPLE PROBLEM.

"THEY BRING TO \$283 MILLION THE TOTAL AMOUNT OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT SINCE THE BEGINNING OF 1989 FOR SIMILAR PURPOSES."

LAST APRIL, BRITAIN CONTRIBUTED SIX MILLION POUNDS (HK\$80 MILLION) TO COVER THE FULL CAPITAL COSTS OF THE PILLAR POINT REFUGEE CENTRE. TWO MONTHS LATER, ANOTHER 4.5 MILLION POUNDS (HK\$55 MILLION) WERE CONTRIBUTED FOR EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION.

THE SPOKESMAN SAID THE LATEST CONTRIBUTIONS WERE YET ANOTHER SIGN OF BRITAIN'S COMMITMENT TO HONG KONG IN GENERAL.

"THEY INDICATE THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT'S RECOGNITION OF THE FINANCIAL BURDEN ON HONG KONG OF THE BOAT PEOPLE PROBLEM AND ITS READINESS TO ASSIST," HE SAID.

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FOREIGN SECRETARY'S WIFE VISITS AP LEI CHAU SCHOOL

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THE WIFE OF THE FOREIGN SECRETARY, MRS DOUGLAS HURD, TOOK A FIRST-HAND LOOK AT HONG KONG'S PRIMARY EDUCATION SYSTEM THIS (TUESDAY) MORNING.

ACCOMPANIED BY THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, MR Y.T. LI, MRS HURD VISITED THE APLICHAU KAIFONG PRIMARY SCHOOL, ABERDEEN, WHICH WAS FOUNDED IN 1953.

SHE WAS GREETED ON ARRIVAL BY ONE OF THE SCHOOL'S MANAGERS, MR PAUL YOUNG, THE HEADMISTRESS OF THE SCHOOL'S AM SESSION, MISS SUSAN LAU, AND THE SENIOR EDUCATION OFFICER (SOUTHERN) OF THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT, DR JIMMY CHAN.

AFTER SEEING A PERFORMANCE OF MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS BY THE PUPILS, MRS HURD TOURED THE SCHOOL BUILDING AND OBSERVED VARIOUS CLASSES, INCLUDING MUSIC, ART, LANGUAGE AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION, IN SESSION.

SHE ALSO TALKED TO A NUMBER OF PUPILS AND ASKED THEM ABOUT THEIR SCHOOL WORK AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES.

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PUBLIC TO BE CONSULTED ON METROPLAN

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MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ARE REQUESTED TO FORWARD THEIR VIEWS ON HOW THEY WOULD LIKE THEIR CITY TO BE RESTRUCTURED SO AS TO CREATE A BETTER PLACE IN WHICH TO LIVE AND WORK.

THE GOVERNMENT TODAY (TUESDAY) RELEASED TWO BOOKLETS -- "METROPLAN - INITIAL OPTIONS" AND THE MORE TECHNICAL "METROPLAN - THE FOUNDATIONS AND FRAMEWORK" -- FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION.

SPEAKING AT A PRESS CONFERENCE, THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR GRAHAM BARNES, SAID THE INITIAL METROPLAN CONCEPTS WOULD BE MODIFIED AND BROUGHT TOGETHER AS A RECOMMENDED STRATEGY FOLLOWING A 10-WEEK PUBLIC CONSULTATION PERIOD.

"THE AIM IS TO SUBSTANTIVELY COMPLETE STUDIES BY THE MIDDLE OF THIS YEAR AND RELEASE A FINAL METROPLAN BY THE END OF THE YEAR," MR BARNES SAID.

THE GOVERNMENT PUBLISHED IN APRIL 1988 THE FIRST METROPLAN BOOKLET OUTLINING THE GENERAL ISSUES TO BE TACKLED IN RESTRUCTURING THE CITY AND PROPOSING A NUMBER OF MAJOR AIMS TO BE USED AS A BASIS FOR PREPARING A COMPREHENSIVE, LONG TERM DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY.

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OVER THE PAST 18 MONTHS, A TEAM OF GOVERNMENT EXPERTS, ASSISTED BY SPECIALIST CONSULTANTS, HAS PRODUCED MORE THAN 40 TECHNICAL REPORTS TO PROVIDE A BASIS FOR THREE INITIAL OPTIONS SHOWING HOW THE URBAN AREAS AROUND THE HARBOUR COULD BE REPLANNED.

MR BARNES SAID A MAJOR CATALYST FOR CHANGE WOULD BE THE RELOCATION OF THE AIRPORT FROM KAI TAK TO CHEK LAP KOK.

"THIS WILL EXPEDITE THE NEED TO PROCEED WITH RECLAMATION WORKS AT CENTRAL AND WEST KOWLOON, TOGETHER WITH THE EARLY PROVISION OF TRUNK ROAD AND PASSENGER RAIL LINKS TO THE NEW AIRPORT," HE SAID.

BESIDES, THE MOVING OF THE AIRPORT WILL RELEASE HEIGHT CONTROLS OVER LARGE PARTS OF KOWLOON, THUS ENABLING REDEVELOPMENT IN SELECTED LOCATIONS.

MR BARNES ALSO SAID THIS WOULD ALSO MAKE AVAILABLE, AFTER 1997, THE EXISTING KAI TAK AIRPORT SITE FOR OTHER DEVELOPMENT AND OPEN UP OPPORTUNITIES FOR NEW URBAN PROJECTS ON RECLAMATION IN KOWLOON BAY.

HE SAID OTHER OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHANGE WOULD ARISE THROUGH RECLAMATIONS AT HUNG HOM BAY, CENTRAL/WAN CHAI, ALDRICH BAY, GREEN ISLAND AND TSUEN WAN BAY. THESE WOULD OPEN SUBSTANTIAL SCOPE FOR REDEVELOPMENT BY THE HOUSING AUTHORITY AND THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION.

"BESIDES HOUSING DEVELOPMENT, A NEED IS FORESEEN FOR DEVELOPING NEW COMMERCIAL OFFICES AND HOTELS AT VARIOUS LOCATIONS THAT ARE WELL SERVED BY HIGH CAPACITY TRANSPORT SYSTEMS," HE ADDED.

OBSOLETE INDUSTRIAL AREAS WILL NEED TO BE REPLANNED AND PROVISION MADE FOR NEW HI-TECH FACTORIES AND GODOWNS IN PROXIMITY TO EXPANDED PORT FACILITIES AT KWAI CHUNG.

"MORE ATTENTION NEEDS TO BE GIVEN TO CONSERVING SENSITIVE LANDSCAPE AREAS AND TO PROVIDING A COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF OPEN SPACES WITHIN THE CITY FOR THE PROVISION OF NEW RECREATIONAL AMENITIES.

"THE BETTER DESIGN OF WATERFRONT AREAS AS PROMENADES FOR PEDESTRIANS IS ALSO SEEN TO BE AN IMPORTANT AIM," MR BARNES SAID.

LINKING ALL THE VARIOUS LAND USES TOGETHER WOULD BE A HIGH CAPACITY, MULTI-MODE TRANSPORT SYSTEM OF BOTH HIGHWAYS AND PASSENGER RAIL SERVICES. SUCH IDEAS ARE INCORPORATED IN THE THREE OPTIONS CONTAINED IN THE DOCUMENTS.

THE OPTIONS PRODUCED HAVE ASSUMED A TOTAL METRO POPULATION OF BETWEEN FOUR TO 4.2 MILLION PERSONS BY 2011, THIS LIMIT ASSUMING A CONTINUING COMMITMENT TO NEW TOWN DEVELOPMENT AND THE WIDER USE OF NEW TOWN STANDARDS IN THE METRO AREA.

/FREE COPIES

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FREE COPIES OF THE "METROPLAN - INITIAL OPTIONS" CAN BE OBTAINED FROM THE MARKETING SECTION OF THE INFORMATION SERVICES DEPARTMENT, FRENCH MISSION BUILDING, GROUND FLOOR, 1 BATTERY PATH, CENTRAL OR THE INFORMATION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS UNIT OF THE WORKS AND THE PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS BRANCHES, MURRAY BUILDING, 21ST FLOOR, GARDEN ROAD, HONG KONG.

THE MORE TECHNICAL DOCUMENT, "METROPLAN - THE FOUNDATIONS AND FRAMEWORK", IS ON SALE AT \$124 PER COPY AT THE GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS SALES CENTRE, GROUND FLOOR, GPO BUILDING, CONNAUGHT PLACE, CENTRAL.

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IMPLEMENTATION OF LIVESTOCK WASTE CONTROL IN STAGE 3 AREA

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THE STATUTORY DATE FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LIVESTOCK WASTE CONTROL SCHEME IN PHASE I STAGE 3 CONTROL AREA WAS JANUARY 1 THIS YEAR, A SPOKESMAN FOR THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DEPARTMENT (EPD) SAID TODAY (TUESDAY).

THE PHASE I STAGE 3 CONTROL AREA COVERS THE TUEN MUN ENVIRONS.

THE SPOKESMAN SAID THAT FOLLOWING THE SAME ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICE APPLIED TO THE STAGE 2 CONTROL AREAS, GENERAL ENFORCEMENT OF CONTROL WOULD NOT BE EXTENDED TO THE TUEN MUN ENVIRONS PENDING THE REVIEW OF THE PRIVATE FARM DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS.

HOWEVER, AFFECTED FARMERS WHO WISH TO CEASE BUSINESS CAN APPLY FOR EX-GRATIA ALLOWANCE AND THOSE WHO WISH TO CONTINUE OPERATION CAN APPLY FOR CAPITAL GRANT AND LOAN.

LETTERS FOR APPLICATION FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE WILL BE SENT TO THE AFFECTED FARMERS SHORTLY.

MEANWHILE, THE EPD HAS COMPLETED THE PRE-OPERATIONAL SURVEY FOR ACTIVE FARMS IN THE PHASE I STAGE 3 CONTROL AREA.

OPERATORS OF ANY LIVESTOCK FARMS IN THE AREA THAT HAVE NOT BEEN SURVEYED SHOULD CONTACT THE DEPARTMENT. THE TELEPHONE NUMBERS ARE 7332281 AND 7245659.

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TRANSPORT WHITE PAPER TO BE TABLED IN LEGCO TOMORROW

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THE WHITE PAPER ON TRANSPORT POLICY IN HONG KONG (JANUARY 1990) WILL BE TABLED IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TOMORROW (WEDNESDAY).

THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, THE HON MICHAEL LEUNG, WILL SPEAK ON THE WHITE PAPER.

MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL WILL ASK A TOTAL OF NINE QUESTIONS AND CONSIDER ONE GOVERNMENT AND ONE PRIVATE BILL AT TOMORROW'S MEETING.

THE SECOND READING DEBATES ON THE BANKING (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 1989 AND ON THE PRIVATE BILL, THE HONG KONG INSTITUTE OF SURVEYORS BILL 1989, WILL BE RESUMED AND WHEN THEY ARE COMPLETED EACH BILL IS DUE TO GO THROUGH THE COMMITTEE STAGE AND THIRD READING.

THE PRIVATE BILL HAS BEEN INTRODUCED BY THE HON CHENG HON-KWAN.

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PLUMMER VILLAGE CLEARED THIS MORNING

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A CLEARANCE OPERATION WAS CARRIED OUT AT PLUMMER VILLAGE, A SQUATTER SLUM IN TAI PO, THIS (TUESDAY) MORNING, FOLLOWING RESETTLEMENT OF ITS INHABITANTS.

THE CLEARANCE INVOLVED A TOTAL OF 662 STRUCTURES, INCLUDING DOMESTIC UNITS, SHOPS AND POULTRY SHEDS.

THE CLEARED SITE WILL BE TURNED INTO A GREENERY AREA.

SOME RESIDENTS OF THE VILLAGE HAVE BEEN REHOUSED IN TEMPORARY HOUSING AREAS AND OTHERS IN TAI WO ESTATE, TAI PO AND TIN PING ESTATE, SHEUNG SHUI.

PLUMMER VILLAGE WAS ESTABLISHED IN 1969 TO RESETTLE FISHERMEN WHO LIVED ON BOARD SMALL FISHING JUNKS AT YUEN CHAU TSAI.

IT ORIGINALLY CONSISTED OF A NUMBER OF TWO-STOREY STRUCTURES, CONTAINING 212 DOMESTIC UNITS.

THE CONDITIONS DETERIORATED AS THE VILLAGERS BUILT NEW STRUCTURES AND ILLEGAL EXTENSIONS. THE POPULATION THEN GREW FROM THE PLANNED CAPACITY OF 1,500 TO 3,000.

IN LATE 1985, THE HOUSING DEPARTMENT DECIDED TO DEMOLISH THE VILLAGE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL REASONS.

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DB FUNDS FOR ACTIVITIES ON ISLANDS

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THE ISLANDS DISTRICT BOARD'S CULTURE, RECREATION AND SPORTS COMMITTEE WILL DISCUSS THE PROPOSED ESTIMATES AND APPORTIONMENT OF FUNDS FOR 1990-91 AT ITS MEETING TOMORROW (WEDNESDAY).

THE FUNDS, ESTIMATED TO BE \$600,000, WILL REPRESENT AN INCREASE OF 12.8 PER CENT OVER THOSE FOR THE PAST YEAR.

MEMBERS WILL DIVIDE THE FUNDS AMONG FOUR MAIN CATEGORIES OF ACTIVITIES, NAMELY DRAGON BOAT RACES, CULTURAL AND RECREATIONAL, SPORTS, AND LUNAR NEW YEAR ACTIVITIES.

THEY WILL ALSO DISCUSS THE PRIORITIES FOR FUND ALLOCATIONS AND REVISE THE GUIDELINES ON VETTING APPLICATIONS.

NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO COVER THE MEETING OF THE ISLANDS DISTRICT BOARD'S CULTURE, RECREATION AND SPORTS COMMITTEE TO BEGIN AT 2.15 PM TOMORROW (WEDNESDAY) IN THE DISTRICT OFFICE CONFERENCE ROOM, 20TH FLOOR, HARBOUR BUILDING, 38 PIER ROAD, CENTRAL.

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EASTERN DB TO DISCUSS LANGUAGE IMPROVEMENT

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THE EASTERN DISTRICT BOARD WILL DISCUSS RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE THE MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION AT SECONDARY SCHOOLS AT ITS MEETING ON THURSDAY (JANUARY 18).

THE RECOMMENDATIONS ARE CONTAINED IN A REPORT PREPARED BY A WORKING GROUP SET UP IN THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT TO REVIEW LANGUAGE IMPROVEMENT MEASURES.

THE BOARD WILL ALSO SEEK DETAILED INFORMATION ON THE PROPOSED CLEARANCE OF BLOCKS ONE TO EIGHT OF CHAI WAN ESTATE.

THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, MR PETER TSAO, WILL ATTEND THE MEETING AS PART OF HIS FAMILIARISATION VISITS TO DISTRICTS.

NOTE TO EDITORS:

MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES ARE INVITED TO COVER THE EASTERN DISTRICT BOARD MEETING TO BE HELD ON THURSDAY (JANUARY 18) IN THE DISTRICT OFFICE CONFERENCE ROOM, FIRST FLOOR, 880-886 KING'S ROAD.

THE MEETING WILL BEGIN AT 2.30 PM.

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TRAFFIC ACCIDENT SITUATION IN NORTH DISTRICT TOPS AGENDA

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MEMBERS OF THE NORTH DISTRICT BOARD'S TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE WILL EXPRESS THEIR VIEWS ON THE TRAFFIC ACCIDENT SITUATION IN THE DISTRICT AT THE COMMITTEE'S MEETING TOMORROW (WEDNESDAY).

A REPORT ENTITLED "ANALYSIS OF ROAD TRAFFIC ACCIDENT STATISTICS BY DISTRICT BOARD AREA 1988" WILL BE TABLED FOR MEMBERS' INFORMATION.

PRESENTING THE REPORT WILL BE AN ENGINEER FROM THE ROAD SAFETY AND STANDARDS DIVISION OF THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT, MR CECIL ABEYKOON.

MEMBERS WILL ALSO DISCUSS THE PROBLEM OF ILLEGAL PARKING IN PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATES.

OTHER ITEMS ON THE AGENDA INCLUDE A BUS SHELTER PROVISION PROGRAMME FOR THE DISTRICT, AND A PROPOSED SURVEY ON PASSENGERS' VIEWS ON SERVICES OFFERED BY THE KOWLOON-CANTON RAILWAY CORPORATION.

NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO COVER THE MEETING OF THE NORTH DISTRICT BOARD'S TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE TO BE HELD TOMORROW (WEDNESDAY) IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM OF THE NORTH DISTRICT OFFICE, JOCKEY CLUB ROAD, FANLING.

THE MEETING WILL BEGIN AT 2 PM.

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CLEAN VILLAGE COMPETITION ON DB COMMITTEE AGENDA

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THE SAI KUNG DISTRICT BOARD'S ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE WILL DISCUSS THE HOLDING OF A CLEAN VILLAGE COMPETITION AFTER THE LUNAR NEW YEAR AT ITS MEETING ON THURSDAY (JANUARY 18).

THE COMPETITION WILL COVER ABOUT 100 VILLAGES AND IS EXPECTED TO LAST FOR TWO MONTHS.

MEMBERS WILL ALSO CONSIDER THE ALLOCATION OF \$1,600 FOR THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC TO CARRY OUT A STUDY ON LANDSLIPS AT PAK SHA CHAU.

/THE FOUR-MONTH

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THE FOUR-MONTH STUDY, WHICH WILL START NEXT MONTH, AIMS TO INVESTIGATE THE CAUSE OF LANDSLIPS AND DRAW UP REMEDIAL PROPOSALS.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO COVER THE MEETING OF THE SAI KUNG DISTRICT BOARD'S ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE TO BE HELD ON THURSDAY (JANUARY 18) IN THE DB CONFERENCE ROOM, SECOND FLOOR, SAI KUNG GOVERNMENT OFFICES, 34 CHAN MAN STREET, SAI KUNG TOWN.

THE MEETING WILL BEGIN AT 10 AM.

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DB COMMITTEE TO DISCUSS SOCIAL WELFARE PAPER

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THE SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE OF THE YUEN LONG DISTRICT BOARD WILL DISCUSS A CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT ON SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICES IN THE 1990'S AND BEYOND AT ITS MEETING TOMORROW (WEDNESDAY).

A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT WILL EXPLAIN THE DOCUMENT AND COLLECT MEMBERS' VIEWS.

THE COMMITTEE WILL ALSO BE CONSULTED ON A REPORT COMPILED BY A WORKING GROUP TO REVIEW IMPROVEMENT MEASURES ON THE USE OF THE ENGLISH AND CHINESE LANGUAGES.

IN ADDITION, MEMBERS WILL CONSIDER FUND APPLICATIONS BY LOCAL ORGANISATIONS FOR HOLDING SOCIAL SERVICE ACTIVITIES IN THE DISTRICT FROM APRIL TO JUNE.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO COVER THE MEETING OF THE YUEN LONG DISTRICT BOARD'S SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE TO BE HELD TOMORROW (WEDNESDAY) IN THE DB CONFERENCE ROOM, 13TH FLOOR, YUEN LONG GOVERNMENT OFFICES, 2 KIU LOK SQUARE, YUEN LONG.

THE MEETING WILL BEGIN AT 2.30 PM.

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CALL TO PREVENT FIRE ON FISHING VESSELS
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THE FISHING COMMUNITY, IN PARTICULAR FISHING VESSEL OPERATORS, HAS BEEN URGED TO TAKE ALL PRECAUTIONS AGAINST FIRE DURING THE COMING WEEKS WHEN THEIR VESSELS RETURN TO PORT FOR THE LUNAR NEW YEAR.

LAST YEAR, SIX FIRES INVOLVING FISHING VESSELS WERE RECORDED, RESULTING IN NINE CASUALTIES AND AN ESTIMATED LOSS OF OVER \$10 MILLION IN PROPERTY.

"FIRE HAZARDS IN TYPHOON SHELTERS ARE PARTICULARLY HIGH AT TIMES OF FESTIVITY WHEN THEY ARE CROWDED WITH WOODEN FISHING VESSELS MOORED ALONGSIDE EACH OTHER," AN AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN SAID TODAY (TUESDAY).

HE RECALLED THAT IN DECEMBER 1986 A DISASTROUS OUTBREAK OF FIRE IN THE ABERDEEN TYPHOON SHELTER DESTROYED 14 FISHING VESSELS AND MANY OTHER DWELLING BOATS.

"TO PREVENT FIRE, FISHERMEN SHOULD AVOID AS FAR AS POSSIBLE COOKING, BURNING OF INCENSE OR STORING INFLAMMABLE GOODS ON BOARD THEIR VESSELS," HE URGED.

"FIRE EXTINGUISHERS AND OTHER FIRE-FIGHTING APPLIANCES SHOULD BE INSTALLED IN THE WHEELHOUSE, KITCHEN AND THE ENGINE ROOM. MOVEOVER, THESE APPLIANCES SHOULD BE INSPECTED AND MAINTAINED AT REGULAR INTERVALS," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

HE ADDED THAT FISHERMEN SHOULD MAINTAIN WATCH ON THEIR VESSELS WHEN THEY ARE MOORED.

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RED PACKETS FOR 11,000 ELDERLY PEOPLE
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ABOUT 11,000 RESIDENTS OF 99 HOSTELS AND HOMES FOR THE ELDERLY TODAY (TUESDAY) RECEIVED LUNAR NEW YEAR LAISSE OF \$100 EACH FROM THE SHANGHAI FRATERNITY ASSOCIATION.

AT A CEREMONY HELD AT THE ASSOCIATION'S HEADQUARTERS IN CENTRAL, CHEQUES WERE PRESENTED TO REPRESENTATIVES OF THE INSTITUTIONS FOR THE ELDERLY FOR DISTRIBUTION TO THE RESIDENTS.

OFFICIATING AT THE CEREMONY, THE ACTING DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WELFARE, MR ALFRED CHUI, COMMENDED THE ASSOCIATION FOR ITS ZEAL AND WORK IN PROMOTING WELFARE SERVICES IN HONG KONG.

ALSO PRESENT AT TODAY'S DISTRIBUTION CEREMONY WERE THE ASSOCIATION'S CHAIRMAN, MR WONG CHI-WAI; HONORARY CHAIRMAN, MR LEE WAI-LEE; AND VICE-CHAIRMAN, MR LEE WOO-SING, MR RICHARD SUNG, AND MR TOMMY ZAU AND MRS H.T. LIU.

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TUESDAY, JANUARY 16, 1990

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CONSTRUCTION SAFETY OFFICE RELOCATED

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THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT BRANCH OFFICE DEALING WITH CONSTRUCTION SAFETY IN TUEN MUN AND YUEN LONG WILL MOVE TO NEW PREMISES IN TUEN MUN TODAY (TUESDAY).

THE BUILDING AND ENGINEERING CONSTRUCTION OFFICE OF THE FACTORY INSPECTORATE, AT PRESENT LOCATED AT THE TUEN MUN GOVERNMENT OFFICES, WILL OPERATE FROM THE THIRD FLOOR OF TAI HING GOVERNMENT OFFICE BUILDING, 16 TSUN WEN ROAD, TUEN MUN.

THE OFFICE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ENFORCEMENT OF THE FACTORIES AND INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS ORDINANCE INCLUDING INSPECTION OF CONSTRUCTION SITES, INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION AND ADVISING EMPLOYERS AND WORKERS ON HOW TO ELIMINATE POTENTIAL WORK HAZARDS.

ENQUIRIES ON INDUSTRIAL SAFETY AND HEALTH CAN BE MADE TO THE OFFICE ON TEL. 4638345.

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FLUSHING WATER CUT IN ABERDEEN

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FLUSHING WATER SUPPLY TO CERTAIN PREMISES IN ABERDEEN WILL BE SUSPENDED FROM 9 AM TO 1 PM ON THURSDAY (JANUARY 18) TO FACILITATE WATER WORKS.

THE SUSPENSION WILL AFFECT ALL PREMISES AT SHEK PAI WAN ESTATE, YUE FAI COURT, CHENGTU ROAD, ABERDEEN MAIN ROAD, TUNG SING ROAD, TSUNG MAN STREET, SAI ON STREET, WU PAK STREET, 162-178 OLD MAIN STREET ABERDEEN, WONG CHUK HANG ROAD (FROM ABERDEEN TECHNICAL SCHOOL TO HOUSE NO. 63), TONG BIN LANE, YIP KAN STREET, ABERDEEN POLICE STATION, HEUNG YIP ROAD (HOUSE NOS. 2-50) AND YIP FAT STREET, WONG CHUK HANG ESTATE, WELFARE ROAD, NAM LONG SHAN ROAD, POLICE SCHOOL ROAD, OCEAN PARK ROAD, INCLUDING THE POLICE TRAINING SCHOOL AND SHUM WAN ROAD.

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TUESDAY, JANUARY 16, 1990

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TEMPORARY TRAFFIC ARRANGEMENTS IN WONG TAI SIN

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TEMPORARY TRAFFIC ARRANGEMENTS WILL BE IMPLEMENTED IN WONG TAI SIN FROM 11 AM ON THURSDAY (JANUARY 18) FOR ABOUT ONE WEEK TO FACILITATE URGENT ROAD REPAIR WORKS.

VEHICLES TRAVELLING ON WONG TAI SIN ROAD EASTBOUND WILL BE BANNED FROM TURNING LEFT ONTO SHATIN PASS ROAD NORTHBOUND.

VEHICLES TRAVELLING ON MA CHAI HANG ROAD SOUTHBOUND HEADING FOR SHATIN PASS ROAD NORTHBOUND WILL BE DIVERTED VIA MA CHAI HANG ROAD, SLIP ROAD, LUNG CHEUNG ROAD EASTBOUND, SLIP ROAD, PO KONG VILLAGE ROAD, FUNG TAK ROAD AND SHATIN PASS ROAD.

VEHICLES TRAVELLING ON LUNG CHEUNG ROAD EASTBOUND HEADING FOR SHATIN PASS ROAD NORTHBOUND WILL BE DIVERTED VIA LUNG CHEUNG ROAD, SLIP ROAD, PO KONG VILLAGE ROAD, FUNG TAK ROAD AND SHATIN PASS ROAD.

GREEN MINIBUSES ON ROUTE 38M (SHORT-WORKING SERVICE) ON THEIR JOURNEYS TO WONG TAI SIN MTR STATION (SHATIN PASS ROAD) WILL BE DIVERTED VIA NGA CHUK STREET, WONG TAI SIN ROAD WESTBOUND, MA CHAI HANG ROAD, SLIP ROAD, LUNG CHEUNG ROAD, SLIP ROAD, PO KONG VILLAGE ROAD AND FUNG TAK ROAD INSTEAD OF USING NGA CHUK STREET, WONG TAI SIN ROAD EASTBOUND, SHATIN PASS ROAD, MING FUNG STREET, SHEUNG FUNG STREET AND FUNG TAK ROAD.

APPROPRIATE TRAFFIC SIGNS WILL BE SET UP TO GUIDE MOTORISTS.

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TEMPORARY CLOSURE OF WUHU VEHICULAR UNDERPASS

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THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCES THAT THE WUHU VEHICULAR UNDERPASS LEADING FROM CHATHAM ROAD NORTH NORTHBOUND TO GILLIES AVENUE SOUTHBOUND HAS BEEN TEMPORARILY CLOSED FROM 1 AM TO 5 AM DAILY FROM SUNDAY (JANUARY 14) TO FACILITATE MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR WORKS.

THE ARRANGEMENT WILL LAST UNTIL THURSDAY (JANUARY 18).

DURING THE CLOSURE, MOTORISTS FROM TSIM SHA TSUI, YAU MA TEI AND THE CROSS HARBOUR TUNNEL WISHING TO PROCEED TO HUNG HOM AREA ARE ADVISED TO USE EITHER CHATHAM ROAD SOUTH, CHEONG WAN ROAD, ON WAN ROAD, CHEONG WAN ROAD AND GILLIES AVENUE; OR GASCOIGNE ROAD, CHATHAM ROAD SOUTH, CHATHAM ROAD NORTH, PAK KUNG STREET, SHUN YUNG STREET, FAT KWONG STREET AND MA TAU WAI ROAD.

APPROPRIATE TRAFFIC SIGNS HAVE BEEN SET UP TO GUIDE MOTORISTS.

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DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN – SUPPLEMENT

ISSUED BY GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SERVICES
BEACONSFIELD HOUSE, HONG KONG. TEL.: 5-8428777

TUESDAY, JANUARY 16, 1990

TRANSCRIPT OF THE PRESS CONFERENCE GIVEN BY
THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AND
COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS, MR DOUGLAS HURD,
ON JANUARY 16, 1990

TUESDAY, JANUARY 16, 1990

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FOREIGN SECRETARY GIVES PRESS CONFERENCE

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THE FOLLOWING IS A TRANSCRIPT OF THE PRESS CONFERENCE GIVEN BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS, MR DOUGLAS HURD, TODAY (TUESDAY):

MR HURD: I'VE HAD A MOST USEFUL AND ENJOYABLE VISIT HERE AND I'D LIKE TO THANK EVERYONE IN HONG KONG WHO HAS BEEN KIND AND COURTEOUS IN THE WAY THEY HAVE MET ME AND THE WAY THEY HAVE RECEIVED ME. IT'S BEEN, AS I SAID, MOST ENJOYABLE, AND I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO THANK THE MEDIA WHO HAVE BEEN PRESENT ON EVERY OCCASION, AND THEN OTHER OCCASIONS AS WELL, FOR THE WAY IN WHICH THEY HAVE PUT THEIR QUESTIONS.

I WANT TO SAY JUST A BRIEF WORD OF INTRODUCTION. I DON'T WANT TO UNDERPLAY THE ANXIETIES WHICH I HAVE FOUND, WHICH YOU WILL BE QUESTIONING ME ABOUT, WHICH CERTAINLY EXIST AND WHICH HAVE BEEN REFLECTED IN MANY OF THE THINGS WHICH PEOPLE LIVING AND WORKING HERE HAVE SAID TO ME. BUT ACTUALLY, THE MAIN IMPRESSION I WILL CARRY BACK TO LONDON THIS EVENING IS NOT ONE OF THE ANXIETIES AND THE PROBLEMS, ALTHOUGH HONG KONG HAS MORE THAN ITS SHARE OF PROBLEMS. I KNEW HONG KONG A BIT 30 YEARS AGO, OR 25 YEARS AGO, AND OF COURSE I KNEW THAT IT HAD TRANSFORMED ITSELF SEVERAL TIMES SINCE I WAS LAST HERE WITH MRS THATCHER, BUT I HADN'T ENTIRELY BEEN PREPARED FOR THE IMPACT OF THOSE CHANGES ON THE VISITOR. THIS IS ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST MODERN CITIES; A FABULOUS SKYLINE, A FIRST-CLASS TRANSPORT SYSTEM, A PUBLIC HOUSING PROGRAMME SECOND TO NONE AND FAR SUPERIOR TO MOST BEING OPERATED IN EUROPE. IT IS THE WORLD'S 11TH LARGEST TRADING ENTITY AND RANKS JUST ABOVE THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA, A COUNTRY WHICH HAS OVER SIX TIMES HONG KONG'S POPULATION. THAT MUCH, EVERYONE IN THIS ROOM KNOWS.

WHAT I HADN'T ENTIRELY BEEN PREPARED FOR WAS THE PLANS TO TRANSFORM HONG KONG YET AGAIN. I'VE BEEN BRIEFED ON THESE, AND I'VE FLOWN OVER THE NEW TERRITORIES AND THE ISLANDS, AND SEEN THE SCALE OF WHAT IS PROPOSED. A NEW AIRPORT WITH A CAPACITY FOR 80 MILLION PASSENGERS A YEAR. THAT IS MORE THAN HEATHROW AND GATWICK TOGETHER, ARE HANDLING NOW. A PORT DEVELOPMENT WHICH WILL TAKE HONG KONG FROM ITS PRESENT POSITION, WHEN IT IS ALREADY THE WORLD'S LARGEST CONTAINER PORT, TO A POSITION WHERE IT WILL BE MORE THAN FIVE TIMES ITS PRESENT SIZE EARLY IN THE NEXT CENTURY. 250 MILES OF NEW ROADS, UP TO 10 MAJOR NEW TUNNELS, SEVERAL NEW TOWNS, AND PUBLIC HOUSING FOR TWO MILLION PEOPLE OVER THE NEXT 10 YEARS. I'M TOLD THE SIZE OF THESE PROJECTS IS UNIQUE IN THE WORLD TODAY. AND THIS ISN'T JUST PIE-IN-THE-SKY, MANY OF THESE THINGS ARE ALREADY UNDER CONSTRUCTION AND THERE IS NO SHORTAGE OF COMPANIES AND BANKS LINING UP TO JOIN IN THE REST. THIS WILL AGAIN TRANSFORM HONG KONG, AND IT WILL ALSO TRANSFORM THE PEARL RIVER DELTA REGION OF CHINA; AND THIS SEEMS TO ME THE NUB.

/THE PEARL

THE PEARL RIVER DELTA IS ALREADY THE HINTERLAND OF HONG KONG. TWO MILLION PEOPLE ARE WORKING THERE, DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY, FOR HONG KONG MANUFACTURING COMPANIES. MANY MORE FARMERS AND OTHERS IN GUANGDONG PROVINCE ARE SELLING THEIR PRODUCE TO HONG KONG. I SAW THE QUEUE OF LORRIES WENDING THEIR WAY SOUTH ACROSS THE BORDER BRINGING THEIR PRODUCE TO HONG KONG. FOUR-AND-A-HALF THOUSAND HONG KONG VENTURES ARE OPERATING IN GUANGDONG PROVINCE. GUANGDONG, AND THE DELTA IN PARTICULAR, IS THE FASTEST GROWING PART OF CHINA, AND GUANGDONG HAS LONG OVERTAKEN SHANGHAI AS THE MAIN EXPORTING PROVINCE, THANKS TO THE PRESENCE AND VIGOUR OF HONG KONG.

BUT EQUALLY, HONG KONG'S GROWTH IN THE EIGHTIES, AMAZING GROWTH, COULDN'T HAVE BEEN ACHIEVED WITHOUT THE GROWTH OF TRADE WITH CHINA AND WITHOUT CHINESE WORKERS. HONG KONG AND CHINA ARE EACH OTHER'S LARGEST TRADING PARTNERS AND EACH OTHER'S LARGEST INVESTORS. I SAY THIS BECAUSE IT SEEMS TO ME AN IMPORTANT FACTOR WHICH MUST NOT BE NEGLECTED. WE HAVE TO LOOK IN ECONOMIC TERMS AT HONG KONG AND THE PEARL RIVER DELTA AS A WHOLE, AND IF YOU DO THAT YOU SEE THE SCALE OF THE PROSPECTS. HONG KONG AND THE DELTA TOGETHER FORM A REGION WITH PROSPECTS UNIQUE IN THE WORLD. HONG KONG IS PREPARING ITSELF FOR THAT. IT'S BUILDING NOW, PLANNING NOW, FOR A MUTUALLY PROFITABLE ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIP WITH THE DELTA WHICH WILL DWARF ANYTHING WE'VE SO FAR SEEN. SO THAT IS WHAT IS BEING AIMED AT, HERE, NOW. WE ARE NOT SIMPLY - THE GOVERNMENT OF HONG KONG OR THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG - ARE NOT SIMPLY TRYING TO KEEP HONG KONG TICKING OVER, WORKING AS IT IS TODAY, BEYOND 1997. THEY WANT TO CONTINUE ITS DRAMATIC PROGRESS AS A RESULT OF CONFIDENCE IN ITS FUTURE AND CONTINUED GROWING CO-OPERATION WITH CHINA AND PARTICULARLY WITH THE SOUTH, AND WITH GUANGDONG PROVINCE.

THAT IS WHAT I WANT TO SAY BY WAY OF INTRODUCTION BECAUSE IT SEEMS TO ME A FACTOR WHICH IS SOMETIMES MISSING IN THE COMMENTS AND ANALYSES WHICH I HAVE READ. BUT IT IS ONLY, I THINK, AGAINST THAT BACKGROUND OF THE FUTURE THAT ONE CAN GET INTO CONTEXT AND DEAL SUCCESSFULLY WITH THE THE PROBLEMS OF THE PRESENT. NOW I AM OPEN TO YOUR QUESTIONS.

ANDREW MCEWEN (THE TIMES): MR HURD, THE SOUTH CHINA MORNING POST, THIS MORNING, QUOTED ONE OF THE OFFICIALS WHO SIR DAVID WILSON SAW IN HIS VISIT TO CHINA, AS SAYING THAT CHINA HAD MADE SOME CONCESSIONS BUT THAT BRITAIN HAD ASKED FOR MORE AND THAT THE TWO SIDES NEEDED TO COME CLOSER TOGETHER. HAVE THERE BEEN CONCESSIONS? WAS THERE A SHIFT? AND IS IT TOO EARLY TO SPEAK OF OPTIMISM?

/MR HURD:

MR HURD: IT IS TOO EARLY TO SPEAK OF OPTIMISM. THERE IS A DISCUSSION, AND OBVIOUSLY THESE WERE MATTERS RAISED BY THE GOVERNOR AND, INDEED, BY SIR PERCY CRADOCK WHEN THEY RECENTLY VISITED PEKING. I'VE ANSWERED QUESTIONS ABOUT OUR STANCE ON THIS COPIOUSLY ENOUGH DURING THIS VISIT, AND OF COURSE HAVE BEEN PREPARED TO DO SO AGAIN. YOU MUST ASK THE CHINESE AUTHORITIES QUESTIONS ABOUT THEIR STANCE. OUR STANCE IS THAT IT IS RIGHT THAT HONG KONG SHOULD, NEXT YEAR, START SUBSTANTIALLY ON THE UPWARD PATH TOWARDS DEMOCRACY WITH THE DIRECT ELECTION OF LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLORS. OUR STANCE IS THAT THAT START SHOULD OCCUR AT A HIGHER LEVEL, CONSIDERABLY HIGHER LEVEL, THAN WAS PLANNED TWO YEARS AGO IN OUR WHITE PAPER OF JANUARY 1988. OUR STANCE IS THAT THE BEST WAY WOULD BE TO ENSURE FOR THOSE RUNNING FOR POLITICAL OFFICE, FOR SEATS, AND FOR THOSE WHO WOULD ELECT THEM, TO ENSURE THAT THIS PROCESS WOULD CONTINUE, AND NOT ONLY CONTINUE BUT PROGRESS AND DEVELOP UPWARDS DURING THE YEARS WHICH FOLLOW. THAT IS WHAT WE ARE AIMING AT. I WILL GO BACK FROM THIS VISIT VERY CLEAR OF THE KEEN INTEREST OF PEOPLE IN HONG KONG THAT THIS SHOULD BE ACHIEVED.

SIMON WONG (SING TAO YAT PO): I WANT TO ASK A FOLLOW UP QUESTION. DOES LI HOU'S SPEECH MEAN THAT WE WILL GET 20 DIRECTLY ELECTED SEATS IN LEGCO NEXT YEAR?

MR HURD: YOU MUST ASK HIM; I DON'T KNOW THAT IT DOES. I DON'T KNOW THAT HE WOULD ANSWER YOU IMMEDIATELY AND TOTALLY IN THE AFFIRMATIVE. NO, I DON'T THINK HE WOULD. BUT YOU MUST ASK THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA ABOUT THEIR STANCE ON THIS MATTER, I DON'T WANT TO PUT WORDS IN THEIR MOUTHS. I AM SIMPLY PERFECTLY PREPARED TO ANSWER QUESTIONS ABOUT WHAT WE ARE AIMING FOR. IT'S NOT JUST A MATTER OF DISCUSSION WITH THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA. I HAVE LISTENED TO MANY, MANY PEOPLE HERE. INDEED, THIS HAS BEEN ONE OF THE MAIN PURPOSES OF MY VISIT, TO ASSESS OPINION AMONG PEOPLE HERE. AND I GO BACK, AS I SAY, WITH A KEEN UNDERSTANDING OF THE VERY STRONG INTEREST HERE IN MAKING THIS SUBSTANTIAL FIRST MOVE NEXT YEAR TOWARDS DIRECT ELECTIONS OF LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLORS.

CLAUDIA MO (AFP): SIR, HAVE YOU OR YOUR DELEGATE ACTUALLY TOLD THE CHINESE BEFOREHAND YOUR DECISION TO BRING IN MORE DEMOCRACY IN HONG KONG, AND WHAT WAS THEIR RESPONSE?

MR HURD: WELL, THEY KNOW THAT WE INTEND TO BRING IN MORE DEMOCRACY IN HONG KONG AND THAT IS PROVIDED FOR IN THE JOINT DECLARATION. THERE HAS BEEN NO SECRET ABOUT THAT. THE QUESTION IS, AT WHAT LEVEL YOU START AND HOW YOU CONTINUE? THOSE ARE THE TWO IMPORTANT QUESTIONS. AND THEY KNOW OUR THINKING ABOUT THAT, AND THEY KNOW BECAUSE WE HAVE REPRESENTED TO THEM, THE STRENGTH OF FEELING HERE. I THINK IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT PEOPLE IN HONG KONG SHOULD THEMSELVES TAKE EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE THESE AND SIMILAR POINTS IN PEKING. I WAS, THEREFORE, VERY GLAD TO READ OF THE DELEGATION WHICH HAS JUST RETURNED TO HONG KONG FROM PEKING - I SAT NEXT TO ONE OF ITS MEMBERS AS IT HAPPENS TODAY, AT A MEAL - AND I WAS GLAD THAT THEY WERE RECEIVED AT A SUITABLY HIGH LEVEL, BY THE CHINESE PRIME MINISTER. THAT IS AN EXAMPLE OF THE SORT OF DIRECT CONTACT AND DIALOGUE WHICH I HOPE WILL BECOME MORE NORMAL, MORE INTENSE, DURING THE MONTHS AND YEARS AHEAD.

CLAUDIA MO (AFP): I'M SORRY, I PROBABLY DIDN'T MAKE MYSELF VERY CLEAR. I WAS SPECIFICALLY REFERRING TO YOUR CHANGE OF MIND CONCERNING 1991 LEGCO ELECTIONS.

MR HURD: HAVE I CHANGED MY MIND? I HAVEN'T ANNOUNCED A DECISION...

CLAUDIA MO: IT'S MORE THAN 10 NOW?

MR HURD: I HAVEN'T ANNOUNCED A DECISION AND I'VE...

CLAUDIA MO: WILL IT BE MORE THAN 10?

MR HURD: OH YES, IT WILL BE MORE THAN 10. AND IF YOUR QUESTION IS: DO THE CHINESE KNOW THAT I'VE SAID IT IS MORE THAN 10? YES, THE ANSWER IS YES.

PERI CHOW (COMMERCIAL RADIO): MR HURD, YOU SAID EARLIER THAT CONVERGENCY IN POLITICAL REFORMS BEFORE AND AFTER 1997 IS VERY IMPORTANT BUT IF THAT CANNOT BE ACHIEVED, BRITAIN WILL STILL GO AHEAD WITH ITS OWN DECISION. BUT ANY DECISION ALONG THIS LINE WILL VERY PROBABLY ANGER CHINA. IS BRITAIN WILLING TO PAY SUCH A PRICE?

MR HURD: WELL, THE BEST WAY IS TO ACHIEVE AN ARRANGEMENT WHICH WILL BE CONTINUOUS, AND NOT JUST CONTINUOUS BUT WHICH WILL MAKE IT CLEAR THAT THE PROGRESS TOWARDS GREATER DEMOCRACY WILL BE CONTINUED AND INCREASED AFTER 1997. THAT IS THE BEST WAY. IF THAT BEST WAY IS NOT ATTAINABLE, THEN, AS YOU RIGHTLY SAY, WE WILL HAVE TO MAKE OUR OWN DECISIONS WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF HONG KONG AS REGARDS THE ELECTIONS, THE PERIOD WHICH IS UNDER OUR CONTROL FOR WHICH WE ARE RESPONSIBLE. AND WE WILL HAVE TO EXPLAIN THAT DECISION AND JUSTIFY THAT DECISION TO THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA. BUT THAT, AS IS PERFECTLY CLEAR UNDER THE JOINT DECLARATION, IS A DECISION FOR US AND THE GOVERNMENT OF HONG KONG TO TAKE.

JOHN ELLIOTT (FINANCIAL TIMES): IF YOU CAN'T GET THAT AGREEMENT WITH CHINA, MIGHT YOU CONSIDER JUST ANNOUNCING YOUR PLANS FOR 1991, LEAVING 1995 IN ABEYANCE FOR DECISION LATER?

MR HURD: THAT WOULD BE ONE OPTION BUT IT'S NOT A DECISION WE'D TAKE.

JOHN ELLIOTT: DO YOU THINK, THOUGH, IT WOULD BE SEEN BY SOME PEOPLE HERE AS SELLING THE PASS? BECAUSE THERE WOULD BE NO PROMISE THEN OF ANYTHING HAPPENING IN 1995.

MR HURD: IT MIGHT BE SEEN BY SOME PEOPLE AS THAT; ON THE OTHER HAND IT IS A COURSE WHICH HAS BEEN URGED UPON ME BY OTHER PEOPLE HERE.

/JOHN ELLIOTT:

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JOHN ELLIOTT: DO YOU FAVOUR IT?

MR HURD: AS I'VE SAID, I'VE TAKEN NO DECISION ON THAT; WE'VE TAKEN NO DECISION ON THAT. IT IS AN OPTION, BUT IT'S NOT THE BEST WAY. I WON'T REPEAT AGAIN FOR YOU WHAT THE BEST WAY IS. BUT I AM PERFECTLY CLEAR, AFTER MY DISCUSSIONS HERE, WHAT THE BEST WAY IS; IT IS ABUNDANTLY CLEAR TO ME. BECAUSE I HAVE HAD TWO STRONG PIECES OF ADVICE URGED ON ME BY MANY PEOPLE. THE FIRST PIECE OF ADVICE, I'VE ALREADY MENTIONED, THE FIRST PIECE OF ADVICE IS THAT THERE SHOULD BE CLEAR DEMONSTRATION BY THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT OF ITS KEENNESS TO SEE A RAPID START TO DEMOCRACY IN HONG KONG; THAT'S THE FIRST PIECE OF ADVICE I'VE HAD FROM MANY, MANY PEOPLE.

THE SECOND PIECE OF ADVICE I'VE HAD, SOMETIMES FROM THE SAME PEOPLE, SOMETIMES FROM OTHER PEOPLE, IS THAT WHAT IS WEAKENING, WHAT IS DIFFICULT IN HONG KONG, IS THE CONSTANT FLOW OF HOSTILE STATEMENTS ON ONE ASPECT OR ANOTHER OF HONG KONG LIFE FROM THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA.

PATRICIA LEUNG (TIN TIN DAILY NEWS): MR LI HOU ALSO POINTS OUT THAT THE RIGHT OF ABODE PACKAGE IS ONE OF THE PROBLEMS THAT HAMPERS THE NORMALISATION OF SINO-BRITISH RELATIONSHIP. DO YOU AGREE WITH THIS?

MR HURD: EVERYBODY HEARD THE QUESTION, DID THEY? IT'S WHETHER I AGREE WITH WHAT MR LI HOU SAID IN PEKING YESTERDAY, THAT THE RIGHT OF ABODE QUESTION IS ONE OF THOSE WHICH HAMPERS UNDERSTANDING AND RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES.

WELL, THE NATIONALITY PACKAGE - IT ISN'T ACTUALLY A RIGHT OF ABODE PACKAGE - THE NATIONALITY PACKAGE WHICH I PROPOSED TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS JUST BEFORE CHRISTMAS, IS NOT OF COURSE AIMED AGAINST CHINA AND WOULD NOT HAVE ANY DAMAGING EFFECTS FOR CHINESE INTERESTS. IT IS DESIGNED, INDEED, TO HONOUR THE IMPORTANT PURPOSE OF THE JOINT DECLARATION, TO MAINTAIN THE PROSPERITY AND STABILITY OF HONG KONG. THAT IS ITS PURPOSE; WE'VE EXPLAINED THAT NOW TO THE CHINESE AUTHORITIES AND I HOPE THAT ON CONSIDERATION THIS WILL NOT BE A CONTINUING OBSTACLE TO DIALOGUE AND CO-OPERATION. WE BELIEVE IN THIS PACKAGE. I GO BACK TO BRITAIN CONFIRMED IN MY VIEW THAT THIS WILL BE A USEFUL PACKAGE, AND NOW WE HAVE TO CONCENTRATE ON PERSUADING THE BRITISH PARLIAMENT TO ACCEPT IT AND TO PASS THE LEGISLATION.

HELLA PICK (THE GUARDIAN): UNTIL NOW, IT HAS BEEN THE PRACTICE IN LONDON TO SAY THAT UNTIL THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT IS AWARE OF THE HONG KONG CONSENSUS ON DEMOCRACY, IT CANNOT TAKE A DECISION. DO YOU NOW ACCEPT THE OMELCO VIEW AS A HONG KONG CONSENSUS OF WHAT THEY WANT ON POLITICAL REFORM? AND DO YOU THINK THAT THERE IS ANY WAY OF BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN BEIJING AND THIS CONSENSUS?

/MR HURD:

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MR HURD: I ACCEPT, PARTICULARLY AFTER MY USEFUL MEETING WITH OMELCO LAST NIGHT, A MEETING WITH THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL TODAY, MY MEETINGS WITH, REALLY QUITE - NOT A TOTAL SPREAD - BUT REALLY QUITE LARGE NUMBERS OF PEOPLE FROM DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE COMMUNITY, THAT THERE IS CONSIDERABLE SUPPORT, STRONG SUPPORT, FOR THE CONSENSUS WHICH OMELCO WORKED OUT, AFTER A GREAT DEAL OF WORK AND A GREAT DEAL OF EFFORT ON THEIR PART. WHETHER THAT CAN BE RECONCILED WITH THE OBJECTIVE OF CONTINUITY UP TO AND BEYOND 1997, IS OF COURSE THE QUESTION TO WHICH WE ARE STILL SEARCHING FOR AN ANSWER. BUT THAT SEARCH, AS I INDICATED, CAN'T GO ON FOR VERY LONG.

K.Y. LAU (RTHK): MR HURD, CAN YOU GIVE ANY ASSURANCE THAT HONG KONG INTERESTS WILL NOT BE IGNORED WHEN BRITAIN NEGOTIATES WITH CHINA ON THE POLITICAL REFORM IN HONG KONG?

MR HURD: YES, I CAN. SOME PEOPLE STILL SEEM TO THINK THAT THERE IS SOME GREAT BRITISH VESTED INTEREST IN SINO-BRITISH RELATIONS QUITE SEPARATE FROM HONG KONG. THAT THERE IS SOME CONSIDERATION WHICH WOULD LEAD US TO OVERRIDE HONG KONG, OR NEGLECT HONG KONG'S INTERESTS. I'VE LOOKED IN EVERY CUPBOARD IN THE FOREIGN OFFICE AND I CAN'T FIND ANY SUCH BRITISH INTEREST. THE OVERWHELMING FACTOR, MUCH THE MOST IMPORTANT COMPONENT, IN BRITISH RELATIONS WITH CHINA IS HONG KONG. AND OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO MAKE JUDGEMENTS AND TAKE DECISIONS IN THE LONG TERM INTERESTS OF HONG KONG, SO LONG AS WE ARE THE SOVEREIGN POWER. OUR OBLIGATION TO MAKE SENSE, IN TERMS OF HONG KONG, OF THE JOINT DECLARATION. SO THAT IS THE MAIN COMPONENT OF OUR DEALINGS WITH CHINA AND I AM GLAD OF THE OPPORTUNITY HERE TO MAKE THAT CLEAR.

SIMON WALTERS (THE SUN): MR HURD, MANY COUNTRIES HAVE CRITICISED BRITAIN'S POLICY OF FORCIBLE REPATRIATION AS BEING VERY CRUEL. DID THE NATURE OF YOUR RECEPTION AT THE BOAT PEOPLE'S CAMP TODAY - THE POLITE RECEPTION, THE PEACEFUL PROTEST, AND THE RANKS OF WELL BEHAVED CHILDREN - DID THAT MAKE YOU HAVE ANY SECOND THOUGHTS ABOUT BRITAIN'S DECISION?

MR HURD: I DON'T THINK MANY COUNTRIES HAVE DENOUNCED IT AS CRUEL. THE CRITICISMS HAVE CERTAINLY COME, BUT ON THE WHOLE THEY HAVE NOT BEEN AS FIERCE CRITICISMS AS I, PERSONALLY, HAD EXPECTED BECAUSE I THINK THERE IS NOW A GREATER UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT HONG KONG HAS ACCEPTED AND ENDURED AS A RESULT OF ITS WILLINGNESS TO RECEIVE BOAT PEOPLE. I AGREE WITH YOU THAT THE DEMONSTRATION TODAY WAS PEACEFUL, WAS WELL ORGANISED. IT WAS A DEMONSTRATION AGAINST REPATRIATION; IT WAS A DEMONSTRATION ORGANISED, I THINK, FOR YOUR BENEFIT RATHER THAN MINE, BUT THAT IS PERFECTLY FAIR AND I MAKE NO COMPLAINT ABOUT THAT. IT DOESN'T ALTER THE POSITION. I MUST SAY, ONE OF THE IMPRESSIONS I RETURN TO LONDON WITH IS OF THE VERY STRONG FEELING AT THE GRASSROOTS HERE IN HONG KONG ON THIS QUESTION OF THE BOAT PEOPLE.

SALLY BLYTH (RTHK): MR HURD, I'D JUST LIKE TO GO BACK TO THE QUESTION OF POLITICAL REFORM. YOU SAID WHEN YOU ARRIVED HERE THAT THE TIMING WOULD BE WITHIN WEEKS. CAN YOU SAY WHETHER A DECISION WILL BE MADE BEFORE THE PLENARY SESSION OF THE BASIC LAW DRAFTING COMMITTEE MEETING IN THE MIDDLE OF FEBRUARY?

/MR HURD:

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MR HURD: NO, I CAN'T BE DEFINITE ABOUT THAT. I'VE USED THE PHRASE "WITHIN WEEKS, I HOPE" AND THAT REMAINS THE POSITION.

HARVEY PONG (WAH KIU YAT PO): DO YOU KNOW THAT SOME LOCAL COMMITTEE LEADERS FEEL VERY DISAPPOINTED BECAUSE THEY ARE NOT GIVEN A CHANCE OF MEETING YOU TO EXPRESS THEIR VIEWS ON THE POLITICAL STRUCTURE, THE VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE, AND THE LIKE?

MR HURD: YES, I DO KNOW OF THAT DISAPPOINTMENT AND I AM VERY, VERY SORRY TO THEM AND I APOLOGISE TO THEM. I KNOW, ALSO, THAT IF I HAD BEEN HERE FOR THREE WEEKS INSTEAD OF THREE DAYS, I WOULD NOT HAVE ACTUALLY BEEN ABLE TO SEE EVERYBODY WHO WOULD HAVE WISHED TO EXPRESS OPINIONS TO ME ON THOSE MATTERS WHICH YOU MENTION. I ASKED MY PARLIAMENTARY PRIVATE SECRETARY, TIM YEO, IF HE WOULD BE GOOD ENOUGH TO RECEIVE, YESTERDAY AFTERNOON, GROUPS WHO WANTED TO MAKE POINTS OF THAT KIND WHILE I WAS ATTENDING ONE DISTRICT BOARD, WHILE I WAS SPEAKING AND LISTENING TO PUBLIC SERVANTS, AND HE DID THAT AND HE HAS REPORTED TO ME ON THEIR REPRESENTATIONS. I'VE ALSO RECEIVED QUITE A LARGE NUMBER OF LETTERS, INCLUDING FROM VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE, AND OF COURSE WE WILL TAKE THOSE INTO ACCOUNT AS WELL. I'VE DONE MY BEST, AND WE'VE DONE OUR BEST AS A TEAM, TO MEET AND LISTEN TO AS MANY PEOPLE AS WE COULD DURING THIS TIME. AND I APOLOGISE TO THOSE WHOM I HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO MEET OR LISTEN TO, PERSONALLY.

CLAUDIA ROSETT (WALL STREET JOURNAL): HAVE YOU ABSOLUTELY RULED OUT A FULLY ELECTED LEGISLATURE BY 1997? AND IF YOU HAVE - THE SECOND PART - IS IT STRICTLY BECAUSE YOU DO NOT WANT TO IRRITATE CHINA, OR IS IT BECAUSE THERE IS SOME WAY IN WHICH THE PEOPLE IN HONG KONG ARE NOT YET READY FOR THAT?

MR HURD: THE CONCENTRATION HAS BEEN ON THE OMELCO CONSENSUS. YOU KNOW WHAT THAT CONTAINS; IT'S A STATESMAN-LIKE PROPOSAL PUT TOGETHER AFTER CONSULTING A GREAT DEAL OF HONG KONG OPINION. THE BEST WAY - AND I HOPE YOU WOULD ACCEPT THIS, AND I HOPE YOUR AMERICAN READERS WOULD ACCEPT THIS TOO - THE BEST WAY IS A SYSTEM WHICH WILL ACTUALLY ENDURE; THE BEST WAY IS A SYSTEM WHICH WILL MAKE A SUBSTANTIAL START NEXT YEAR TOWARD DEMOCRACY, A START WHICH WILL THEN BE MAINTAINED AND DEVELOPED. THAT IS THE BEST WAY IF ONE IS SERIOUSLY INTERESTED IN DEMOCRACY IN HONG KONG AND WISHING TO RECONCILE THAT WITH THE JOINT DECLARATION, WITH THE SINO-BRITISH AGREEMENT. IT'S A UNIQUE SITUATION, HONG KONG, BECAUSE THE OUTCOME OF CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGE IS NOT INDEPENDENCE, CANNOT BE INDEPENDENCE; IT IS THE SINO-BRITISH AGREEMENT, IT IS INCORPORATION IN THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC AS AN SAR. IF THAT IS THE OUTCOME WE HAVE TO FIND A WAY OF STARTING AND THEN SUSTAINING AND IMPROVING THE MOVEMENT TO DEMOCRACY WITHIN THAT FRAMEWORK, AND THAT'S WHAT WE'RE AIMING AT.

CLAUDIA ROSETT: MAY I JUST FOLLOW UP. WHAT IS THE FURTHEST YOU EXPECT IT TO HAVE GONE BY 1997?

MR HURD: WELL, THAT IS ONE OF THE MATTERS WHICH WE ARE DISCUSSING, AS TO HOW FAR THAT CAN ACTUALLY BE DONE, WITH THE CONTINUED UPWARD SLOPE BEYOND THAT. I.E. WITHOUT THE WHOLE THING COLLAPSING IN 1997.

/SIMON MACKLIN

SIMON MACKLIN (SCMP): FOREIGN SECRETARY, NOW YOU HAVE HAD A CHANCE TO LISTEN TO THE VOICES OF THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG, WHAT OTHER VOICES DO YOU HAVE TO HEAR BEFORE YOU MAKE YOUR ANNOUNCEMENTS ON THE POLITICAL REFORM? WHY IS IT YOU CAN'T BE PRECISE ABOUT YOUR TIME-TABLE? IS IT THAT THERE IS SOME OTHER INFLUENCE YOU'RE WAITING FOR?

MR HURD: BECAUSE I DON'T YET KNOW IF THE BEST WAY WHICH I'VE DESCRIBED IS ATTAINABLE. WHEN I KNOW THE ANSWER TO THAT QUESTION, WE WILL BE ABLE TO TAKE A DECISION, AND I DON'T THINK THAT WILL BE VERY LONG.

SIMON MACKLIN: BUT HOW WILL YOU HEAR WHETHER OR NOT IT IS ATTAINABLE? WHAT WILL HELP YOU MAKE...

MR HURD: WE WILL HAVE TO MAKE A JUDGEMENT AS A RESULT OF WHAT HAS BEEN SAID HERE, AS A RESULT OF CONTACTS WITH THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC, AS TO WHETHER THE BEST WAY IS ATTAINABLE. IF IT'S NOT ATTAINABLE THEN WE WILL HAVE, AS I'VE SAID, TO TAKE THE BRITISH AND HONG KONG GOVERNMENTS' OWN DECISION IN WHAT WE BELIEVE TO BE THE BEST INTERESTS OF HONG KONG.

SIMON MACKLIN: SO IT'S UP TO CHINA, THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC, TO TELL YOU WHETHER OR NOT IT IS ATTAINABLE?

MR HURD: NO, IT'S NOT. OBVIOUSLY, IF ONE IS TALKING ABOUT A CONTINUED PROGRESS AFTER 1997 THERE ARE TWO PARTS OF IT; ONE IS BEFORE AND ONE IS AFTER. WHAT IS BEFORE IS WITHIN OUR DECISION; WE HAVE TO TAKE DECISION AND THAT IS NOT A MATTER WHICH CHINA DICTATES. I MADE THAT CLEAR FROM THE VERY BEGINNING. BUT WHAT HAPPENS AFTER, WHETHER IT IS POSSIBLE TO MAINTAIN AND CONTINUE THE PROGRESS, THEN THAT IS NOT A MATTER FOR OUR DECISION. AND THAT IS WHY THE KIND OF CONTACTS WHICH THE GOVERNOR HAS HAD, THE KIND OF DISCUSSIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN HAD WITH THE CHINESE ON THIS, ARE ESSENTIAL, IF ONE IS LOOKING, SERIOUSLY, FOR THE BEST WAY. IT IS NOT GIVING THEM A VETO OR A RIGHT OF DECISION ON WHAT IS WITHIN OUR JURISDICTION BUT IT IS SEEKING TO ESTABLISH WHAT IS THE BEST WAY FOR HONG KONG - NOT THE SINO-BRITISH RELATION - THE BEST WAY FOR HONG KONG IS ACTUALLY ATTAINABLE.

PHILIP BOWRING (FAR EASTERN ECONOMIC REVIEW): I CAN'T CONFESS TO HAVE READ IT, BUT I GATHER YOU HAVE WRITTEN A NOVEL ABOUT THE LAST DAYS OF HONG KONG...

MR HURD: IT'S A BEST SELLER WITH A HAPPY ENDING.

PHILIP BOWRING: WILL TRUTH BE STRANGER THAN FICTION?

MR HURD: DO READ IT. YOU MIGHT EVEN PERSUADE MY PUBLISHERS TO REPRINT IT.

/EMILY LAU

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EMILY LAU (FAR EASTERN ECONOMIC REVIEW): FOREIGN SECRETARY, IN YOUR CONTACT WITH THE HONG KONG PEOPLE IN THE LAST FEW DAYS, DO YOU DETECT A LEVEL OF CYNICISM AND DISENCHANTMENT WITH THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT'S POLICY ON HONG KONG, AND THAT SOME PEOPLE FEEL THAT - TO QUOTE YOUR OWN WORDS - "THIS LAST MAIN CHAPTER OF THE STORY OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE MAY INDEED END IN A SHABBY AND EVEN DISHONOURABLE WAY"?

MR HURD: NO, I DON'T. I MEAN, I READ BEFORE I CAME THAT'S WHAT I WOULD FIND AND I HAVEN'T FOUND IT. I HAVE FOUND ANXIETIES EXPRESSED TO ME, AND STRONGLY EXPRESSED TO ME, BUT NOT IN AT ALL A CYNICAL VEIN. AND I'VE FOUND, AS I'VE TRIED TO EXPRESS IN WHAT I'VE SAID AT THE BEGINNING, HERE, A MUCH MORE EXCITING PROSPECT OF THE FUTURE FOR HONG KONG THAN I'D REALISED WHEN I CAME HERE.

STEVEN VINES (THE OBSERVER): MR HURD, GIVEN THE EVENTS OF JUNE, DO YOU THINK BRITAIN IS NEGOTIATING WITH A REASONABLE LEADERSHIP IN PEKING?

MR HURD: I THINK THAT OUR CONTACTS WITH THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC ABOUT CHINA HAVE BEEN DIFFICULT BECAUSE THEY FEEL SOMEWHAT DEFENSIVE AFTER THE EVENTS OF JUNE, FOR REASONS WHICH YOU'VE ANALYSED IN YOUR NEWSPAPER AND WHICH ARE PRETTY CLEAR. THEY ARE, AS A RESULT, MORE SUSPICIOUS THAN THEY WERE BEFORE. BUT EQUALLY, I BELIEVE THAT THERE IS A POWERFUL CHINESE INCENTIVE TO CONTINUE TO MAKE SENSE OF THE PHILOSOPHY, WHICH AFTER ALL THEY INVENTED AND WHICH THE CHINESE PRIME MINISTER REAFFIRMED ONLY YESTERDAY, OF TWO SYSTEMS IN ONE COUNTRY. BECAUSE IT IS ONLY UNDER THAT PHILOSOPHY, WITH HONG KONG AS A FREE AND VIGOROUS SAR WITHIN THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC, IT'S ONLY UNDER THAT PHILOSOPHY THAT THEY HAVE A CHANCE OF REALISING FOR CHINA THE KIND OF BENEFITS WHICH I WAS SKETCHING EARLIER.

PETER SEIDLITZ (HANDELSBLATT): AS THE COUNTRY CLOSEST TO HONG KONG FROM THE EUROPEAN COUNTRIES, WHAT WOULD YOU ADVISE THE AMERICANS AND THE EUROPEANS TO DO NOW IN DEALINGS WITH CHINA? BUSINESS AS NORMAL? CREDIT AS NORMAL? SHOULD ONE DO LIKE BEFORE JUNE 4TH OR..?

MR HURD: NO, WE ARE BOUND BY THE AGREEMENTS REACHED IN EUROPE AMONG THE 12, ABOUT HIGH LEVEL CONTACTS WITH CHINA, AND WE ARE BOUND BY THE DIFFERENT ARRANGEMENTS WHICH WERE AGREED THEN AND THOSE REMAIN.

PETER SEIDLITZ: ARE YOU CRITICAL OF THE VISIT OF MR SCOWCROFT TO CHINA? OBVIOUSLY THIS BROKE THE AGREEMENT.

MR HURD: NO, I AM NOT CRITICAL. OR OF THE VISITS OF SIR PERCY CRADOCK OR THE GOVERNOR, THEY ARE NOT HIGH LEVEL MINISTERIAL VISITS.

PETER SEIDLITZ: BUT THAT DOES NOT MAKE SENSE OF A COMMON POLICY, IF YOU BREAK, INDIVIDUALLY, THIS POLICY?

MR HURD: NO, I WAS TRYING TO EXPLAIN THAT I DON'T BELIEVE IT WAS BROKEN.

/CHAN OI-LAI

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CHAN OI-LAI (MING PAO DAILY NEWS): I WANT TO ASK A QUESTION ON THE RIGHT OF ABODE ISSUE. IN THE NATIONALITY ACT OF CHINA IT DOES NOT MAKE A CLEAR ANSWER TO US WHETHER THOSE WHO ARE GRANTED THE RIGHT OF ABODE IN THE UK WILL BE RECOGNISED AS FOREIGNERS OR AS CHINESE CITIZENS. AND SO WHAT IS THE VIEW OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT ON IT? AND HOW IS THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT GOING TO DEAL WITH THIS DUAL-NATIONALITY ISSUE? AND ALSO, SO THAT THE RIGHT OF ABODE ISSUE WILL NOT BE AN EMPTY PROMISE AND WILL ENCOURAGE THE HONG KONG PEOPLE TO REMAIN IN HONG KONG.

MR HURD: I'M SORRY, I MISSED THE SECOND PART. I GOT THE FIRST PART BUT COULD YOU REPEAT THE SECOND PART OF THE QUESTION?

CHAN OI-LAI: I WANT TO KNOW WHAT IS THE VIEW OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT ON THIS DUAL-NATIONALITY ISSUE? AND ALSO, WHAT WILL THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT DO TO HANDLE THIS PROBLEM AND SO THAT THE RIGHT OF ABODE WILL NOT BE AN EMPTY PROMISE AND WILL ENCOURAGE THE HONG KONG PEOPLE TO REMAIN IN HONG KONG?

MR HURD: WELL, WE NATURALLY HOPE, AND WOULD EXPECT, THAT PEOPLE WHO HAVE UNITED KINGDOM PASSPORTS, HOWEVER THEY RECEIVED THEM, WILL BE TREATED AS ONE AS UNITED KINGDOM CITIZENS. AND I DON'T THINK THAT THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT HAS REASON TO DOUBT THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE NATIONALITY PROPOSAL. AS I'VE SAID, WE BELIEVE IT TO BE FULLY IN CONFORMITY WITH THE JOINT DECLARATION AND ACTUALLY HELPFUL IN THE AIM WHICH THE JOINT DECLARATION STATES. I DON'T THINK THERE SHOULD BE PRACTICAL PROBLEMS THERE.

C.Y. CHEUNG (BBC WORLD SERVICE - CHINESE): THE LABOUR PARTY AND MANY OF YOUR PROMINENT BACK-BENCHERS ARE STILL PRESSING THEIR CASE AGAINST YOUR NATIONALITY PACKAGE. CAN YOU NOW ASSURE THE HONG KONG PEOPLE THAT YOU ARE ABSOLUTELY CONFIDENT THAT THE HOUSE OF COMMONS WILL PASS YOUR PACKAGE WHEN IT IS BEING PUT FORWARD TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS IN APRIL OR MAY?

MR HURD: YES. I DON'T KNOW ABOUT APRIL OR MAY BECAUSE NO DECISION HAS BEEN TAKEN ABOUT TIMING, BUT I BELIEVE THAT WHEN THAT TIME COMES, YES, THE HOUSE OF COMMONS WILL PASS THE PACKAGE. AND I WILL GO BACK NOW AND SAY, PERHAPS WITH YOUR HELP, THAT IT REMAINS MY VIEW, IN FACT MY VIEW IS CONSIDERABLY STRENGTHENED, THAT THIS IS AN ESSENTIAL PART - IT'S NOT THE TOTAL ANSWER - BUT IT IS AN ESSENTIAL PART OF BUILDING UP CONFIDENCE IN THE FUTURE OF HONG KONG AND THAT IT WOULD BE A VERY GRAVE MISTAKE ON THE PART OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS IF, WHEN THE TIME COMES, IT WERE TO REJECT IT.

CHARLES WATSON (ICRT RADIO, TAIWAN): GIVEN THAT THE JOINT DECLARATION AND THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANT WHICH WILL FORM THE BASIS OF THE BILL OF RIGHTS, ARE LOGGED WITH THE UNITED NATIONS, IF THE BASIC LAW SEEMS INCOMPATIBLE IN ANY WAY, WHAT WILL BRITAIN'S RESPONSE BE?

/MR HURD:

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MR HURD: WELL THE BASIC LAW INCLUDES - I THINK IT'S ARTICLE 39 - IT INCLUDES SPECIFIC PROVISION IN ITS PRESENT DRAFT FOR THE TWO PRINCIPAL UNITED NATIONS' COVENANTS WHICH DEAL WITH HUMAN RIGHTS. SO, I MEAN, SO FAR SO GOOD.

CHARLES WATSON: FREEDOM OF THE PRESS AND LEVELS OF DEMOCRACY WHICH ARE STATED IN THE JOINT DECLARATION AND ARE DISCUSSED ON NON-OFFICIAL LEVELS, IF THOSE ARE - NOT SO MUCH CONTRAVENED BUT IF THE BASIC LAW'S STANDING IS NOT WHAT BRITAIN WANTS, HOW WILL BRITAIN REACT?

MR HURD: WE HAVE MADE REPRESENTATIONS TO THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC ABOUT VARIOUS PARTS OF THE DRAFT BASIC LAW AND WE WILL CONTINUE TO DO SO. WE'VE AGREED WITH THEM THAT WE WILL DO SO, NOT IN PUBLIC, BUT WE WILL CONTINUE TO DO SO IN ORDER TO MAKE SURE THAT, SO FAR AS WE CAN, THE DRAFT BASIC LAW DOES REFLECT FULLY THE SPIRIT AS WELL AS THE LETTER OF THE JOINT DECLARATION.

OSWALD KWAN (ORIENTAL DAILY NEWS): AT THE VERY BEGINNING OF THE TRIP, YOU SAID THAT YOU'VE COME HERE TO LISTEN TO OPINIONS, AND NOW IT COMES TO THE END. HAVE YOU MADE ANY CONCLUSIONS ON THE HONG KONG PEOPLE'S EXPECTATIONS ON POLITICAL REFORM IN 1991? AND DO YOU CONCEIVE ANY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THESE EXPECTATIONS AND THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT'S POINT OF VIEW? IF THERE IS, HOW WOULD THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT REACT TO THESE DIFFERENCES?

MR HURD: I RETURN VERY CLEAR FROM MANY CONVERSATIONS OF THE KEEN INTEREST AMONG MANY, THE PASSIONATE INTEREST AMONG SOME, IN MAKING AN EARLY DEFINITE STRONG START IN HONG KONG TOWARDS DIRECT ELECTIONS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL. THAT HAS BEEN ABUNDANTLY CLEAR. YOU MUST ASK THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT EXACTLY HOW THEY STAND TODAY ON THE QUESTION OF NUMBERS AND PROCEDURES. THE BEST ANSWER, WHICH WE CONTINUE TO SEEK FOR, IS ONE WHICH WILL RECONCILE THE PRESENT WISHES - EXPRESSED, FOR EXAMPLE, IN THE OMELCO CONSENSUS - FOR HOW HONG KONG SHOULD START, RECONCILE THAT WITH THE CONTINUATION AND THE FURTHER STRENGTHENING OF DEMOCRACY AND DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS AFTER 1997. AND WE ARE SEEKING TO RECONCILE THOSE TWO BECAUSE THAT IS CLEARLY THE BEST WAY. IF WE CAN'T ACHIEVE THAT BEST WAY, THEN WE WILL HAVE TO MAKE A JUDGEMENT, THE BRITISH AND HONG KONG GOVERNMENTS WILL HAVE TO MAKE A JUDGEMENT, IN WHICH THE STRONGLY EXPRESSED VIEWS OF THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG WILL OBVIOUSLY BE A CRUCIAL FACTOR. AND JUST TO COMPLETE THE STORY AGAIN, WE WILL HAVE TO MAKE THAT JUDGEMENT, I HOPE WITHIN WEEKS.

LORNA WONG (SING TAO IN LONDON): SECRETARY OF STATE, HAS THIS TRIP HELPED YOU TO MAKE UP YOUR MIND ON CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM? AND HOW CLOSE ARE YOU TO A DECISION? CAN WE EXPECT ANYTHING BEFORE THE END OF NEXT MONTH? AND IS THE OMELCO PROPOSAL THE MOST FAVOURABLE ONE TO YOU AT THE MOMENT?

/MR HURD:

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MR HURD: YES, IT HAS HELPED. I'VE HAD MANY EXPRESSIONS OF VIEW. THEY HAVEN'T BEEN UNANIMOUS; I WOULDN'T LIKE TO GIVE THE IMPRESSION THAT EVERYTHING I'VE HEARD FROM HONG KONG CHINESE ON THIS SUBJECT HAS BEEN UNANIMOUS. AT THE JOINT BOARD I WENT TO YESTERDAY AFTERNOON, THERE WAS QUITE A DIVISION OF VIEW ON THIS PARTICULAR SUBJECT. BUT CERTAINLY, THERE IS A VERY STRONG VIEW BACKING THE OMELCO CONSENSUS, AS YOU SAY. WHAT WE HAVE TO ESTABLISH IS, AT WHAT LEVEL AND IN WHAT WAY WE CAN START THE PROCEDURE WHICH CLEARLY MOST PEOPLE HERE WANT, FOR A STRONG START FOR DEMOCRACY IN HONG KONG IN 1991, HOW WE CAN BEST START THAT AND MAXIMISE AND INCREASE TO THE GREATEST POSSIBLE EXTENT THE PROSPECT OF THAT CONTINUING AND DEVELOPING UP TO AND BEYOND 1997.

SARAH HELM (THE INDEPENDENT): YOU'VE SAID THAT MANY PEOPLE HAVE URGED THE COURSE OF MAKING AN ANNOUNCEMENT JUST FOR 1991, AND LEAVING THE REST UP IN THE AIR. CAN YOU SAY HOW MANY PEOPLE AND WHO THEY'VE BEEN...?

MR HURD: NO, I DIDN'T SAY MANY PEOPLE, I SAID THE POINT HAD BEEN PUT TO ME - AND I CAN'T ACTUALLY REMEMBER BY WHOM. BUT CERTAINLY I DO REMEMBER, I THINK IN THE COURSE OF TODAY, IT BEING SAID: WELL, WHY DON'T YOU JUST MAKE AN ANNOUNCEMENT FOR 1991? BUT WE HAVEN'T REACHED A CONCLUSION ABOUT THAT AND I WOULDN'T WANT TO GIVE YOU THE IMPRESSION THAT IT WAS A FAVOURED OPTION, BUT IN ANSWER TO YOUR COLLEAGUE I SAID, OBVIOUSLY IT WAS AN OPTION WHICH WE HAVEN'T AS YET EXCLUDED.

PAUL HARRINGTON (HK STANDARD): MR HURD, YOU HAVE SAID IT MAY BE POSSIBLE FOR BRITAIN TO MAKE A UNILATERAL DECISION ON THE PACE OF DEMOCRATIC REFORMS FOR 1991. UP UNTIL WHEN DO YOU THINK SUCH DECISIONS WILL BE POSSIBLE FOR BRITAIN, CONCERNING HONG KONG?

MR HURD: WELL, IT WOULD ALWAYS BE POSSIBLE TO DO THAT. THAT POSSIBILITY, OF COURSE, EXISTS AND WE MAY WELL HAVE TO EXERCISE IT.

LOUIS TING (HK ECONOMIC TIMES): DO YOU THINK THAT THE PEOPLE INCLUDED IN THE NATIONALITY PACKAGE HAVE THE CONSULAR PROTECTION IN HONG KONG AFTER 1997? THE FIRST QUESTION.

MR HURD: YES. THE ANSWER TO THE FIRST QUESTION IS, YES.

LOUIS TING: ACCORDING TO THE BILL OF RIGHTS NOW UNDER DRAFTING IN HONG KONG, DO YOU THINK THAT THE BILL OF RIGHTS SHOULD OVERRIDE ALL THE OTHER ORDINANCES IN HONG KONG? AND THE OTHER IS: YOU HAVE SAID THAT HONG KONG HAS SHOULDERED A VERY BIG RESPONSIBILITY ON THE VIETNAMESE REFUGEE ISSUE. DO YOU THINK THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT SHOULD PAY ALL THE EXPENSES IN DEALING WITH THE VIETNAMESE REFUGEE PROBLEMS IN HONG KONG?

/MR HURD:

MR HURD: ON THE BILL OF RIGHTS, DISCUSSION OF THAT IS PROCEEDING IN HONG KONG THROUGH THE INSTITUTIONS OF HONG KONG. IT WAS AN IDEA WHICH I THINK STARTED WITH MY PREDECESSOR, GEOFFREY HOWE, WHEN HE WAS HERE IN JULY. I'M GLAD IT'S BEEN TAKEN UP. THE NOTION THAT SOMEHOW THE TEXT HAS BEEN SHOWN TO THE CHINESE AND THEY'VE MADE REPRESENTATIONS AGAINST IT, HAS NO BASIS SO FAR AS I KNOW AND I AM MYSTIFIED AS TO HOW IT AROSE. IT'S BEING DISCUSSED HERE IN HONG KONG. THE DRAFT BASIC LAW, AS I THINK I'VE ALREADY MENTIONED, DOES INCORPORATE RECOGNITION OF THE TWO MAIN UN COVENANTS INVOLVED, WHICH, THE BILL OF RIGHTS SEEKS TO REFLECT ONE, AND SO THIS IS PROCEEDING IN, IT SEEMS TO ME, AN ORDERLY WAY IN HONG KONG THROUGH ITS OWN INSTITUTIONS.

AS REGARDS THE BOAT PEOPLE, ONE OF THE POINTS PUT MOST STRONGLY TO ME, IN FACT THE POINT ON WHICH THE DISTRICT BOARD - ITS MEMBERS WERE ACTUALLY MOST VEHEMENT YESTERDAY AFTERNOON - WAS ON THE QUESTION OF THE BOAT PEOPLE AND ON THE PARTICULAR POINT YOU MAKE ABOUT RESOURCES AND FINANCING. RECENTLY, WE HAVE ANNOUNCED A NEW CONTRIBUTION - THIS IS THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT - OF SIXTY-TWO-AND-A-HALF-MILLION HONG KONG DOLLARS TOWARDS IMPROVING EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION, AND SEVENTY-MILLION HONG KONG DOLLARS AS A CONTRIBUTION OF 50 PERCENT TOWARDS A NEW CAMP AT TAI A CHAU. AND IN ADDITION TO THIS, WE PAY SUBSTANTIALLY - THAT'S SIXTEEN-AND-A-QUARTER-MILLION HONG KONG DOLLARS - IN HELPING WITH REINTEGRATION AND TRANSPORT COSTS. SO THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT IS MAKING A SUBSTANTIAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE PROBLEM OF THE BOAT PEOPLE. BUT OF COURSE THE RIGHT ANSWER IS TO EMPTY THE CAMPS AS QUICKLY AS WE CAN AND TO PREVENT THEM RE-FILLING. THOSE ARE THE TWO ARMS OF THE PROBLEM. AND I WOULD HOPE THAT AT THE MEETING IN GENEVA, WHICH SHOULD BE HELD BEFORE LONG, I WOULD HOPE THAT THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY MIGHT AGREE THAT THERE SHOULD BE REPATRIATION AS WELL AS VOLUNTARY RETURN, AND IF THEY DID SO AGREE, AND TO THE MONITORING, THEN OF COURSE THAT WOULD ALL TAKE PLACE UNDER THE FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS WHICH COVER THE VOLUNTEERS AT THE MOMENT, AND ARE INTERNATIONAL AND DON'T FALL ON HONG KONG OR ON THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT.

LOUIS TING: THE OTHER QUESTION -- OVERRIDE THE OTHER ORDINANCES?

MR HURD: WELL, THAT'S A MATTER FOR HONG KONG -- I HAVEN'T STUDIED THE TEXT. I KNOW THAT EXCO DECIDED TO HAVE ANOTHER LOOK AT THEM AND THAT'S THEIR RIGHT, THAT'S A MATTER TO BE WORKED OUT HERE.

CHOI SUK-FONG (SING TAO MAN PO): MR HURD, AS YOU KNOW, THE CIVIL SERVICE IS NOW FACING A BRAIN-DRAIN PROBLEM. DO YOU THINK SETTING UP A FUND FOR THEIR PENSION IS THE PROPER SOLUTION?

MR HURD: I KNOW THAT THE AGREEMENT WITH THE CHINESE -- IT'S THE JOINT DECLARATION ITSELF, ISN'T IT? -- DOES PROVIDE THAT PENSIONS SHOULD BE PAID, AFTER 1997, ON TERMS NOT LESS FAVOURABLE THAN THOSE AT PRESENT EXISTING. SO THAT IS A CLEAR COMMITMENT. BUT I ALSO KNOW THAT BECAUSE OF ANXIETIES WHICH HAVE BEEN EXPRESSED - AND WERE ACTUALLY EXPRESSED TO ME YESTERDAY, AGAIN, - I KNOW THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF HONG KONG IS LOOKING TO SEE IF THERE ARE WAYS IN WHICH THAT CLEAR ASSURANCE, CLEAR AGREEMENT, CAN BE BUTTRESSED. SO AS TO RELIEVE THE ANXIETY YOU MENTION. BUT IT IS THERE, CLEAR ENOUGH, IN THE JOINT DECLARATION.

CHRISTOPHER LOCKWOOD (DAILY TELEGRAPH): WE'VE HEARD A LOT ABOUT THE POLITICAL STRUCTURE SIDE OF THE BASIC LAW BUT NOT VERY MUCH ABOUT THE REST OF IT. AND I AM REFERRING TO THINGS LIKE THE FACT THAT AN ARTICLE AGAINST SUBVERSION HAS BEEN WRITTEN IN: THAT CHINA RETAINS THE RIGHT TO INTERPRET AND AMEND THE BASIC LAW. IS BRITAIN HAPPY WITH THE DRAFT BASIC LAW AS IT EXISTS? AND AS IT IS VIRTUALLY NOW COMPLETE, IT WOULD BE VERY DIFFICULT TO REVISE IT SUBSTANTIALLY NOW. AND WHAT IS BRITAIN DOING TO TRY TO CALM THE FEARS OF PEOPLE THAT SAY THAT THIS BASIC LAW ACTUALLY GIVES TOO MUCH POWER TO CHINA AND TOO LITTLE TO HONG KONG?

MR HURD: WELL, OF COURSE WE DON'T HAVE A SEAT AT THE DRAFTING TABLE. WHEREAS THERE ARE REPRESENTATIVES FROM HONG KONG WHO DO. BUT WE HAVE TAKEN OPPORTUNITIES OPEN TO US TO MAKE REPRESENTATIONS TO THE CHINESE ABOUT THE COURSE THE DRAFTING OF THE BASIC LAW WAS TAKING. FOR EXAMPLE, WE DID PASS TO THE CHINESE THE OMELCO PAPER ON THE DRAFT BASIC LAW WHICH COVERED SOME OF THE POINTS WHICH ARE MENTIONED. AND WE THOUGHT THAT WAS A GOOD PAPER.

CHRISTOPHER LOCKWOOD: SO ARE YOU SAYING THAT THE DRAFT BASIC LAW IS BASICALLY NOW IN CONFORMITY WITH THE JOINT DECLARATION?

MR HURD: NO. I'M NOT. I'M SAYING WE'VE TAKEN THE OPPORTUNITIES OPEN TO US TO MAKE REPRESENTATIONS ABOUT IT. I THINK I ALSO SAID, IN ANSWER TO AN EARLIER QUESTION, THAT WE AGREED THAT WE SHOULD NOT PUBLISH THOSE REPRESENTATIONS. BUT WE'VE TAKEN THE OPPORTUNITIES OPEN TO US TO INFLUENCE THE DRAFT BASIC LAW, EVEN THOUGH UNDER THE TERMS OF THE AGREEMENT WE ARE NOT, AS IT WERE, A NEGOTIATING PARTY TO THAT.

MIMI YEUNG (TVB): MR FOREIGN SECRETARY, CHINA HAS REPEATEDLY ATTACKED THE HONG KONG ALLIANCE IN SUPPORT OF THE PRO-DEMOCRACY MOVEMENT IN CHINA WHICH IS BASED IN HONG KONG AS BEING SUBVERSIVE. NOW HAS THERE BEEN ANY PRESSURE EXERTED ON TO YOU TO DISBAND THIS ORGANISATION? AND DO YOU THINK THE EXISTENCE OF THIS ORGANISATION WILL STAND IN THE WAY OF GOOD SINO-HONG KONG-BRITISH RELATIONS?

MR HURD: WHEN THIS KIND OF POINT HAS BEEN RAISED, WE'VE HAD TO EXPLAIN TO THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT. AND WE WILL HAVE TO GO ON EXPLAINING TO IT. THAT A FUNDAMENTAL POINT ABOUT HONG KONG IS THAT PEOPLE ARE ALLOWED TO EXPRESS THESE OPINIONS AND THAT THAT IS NOT SUBVERSION. THAT IS EXPRESSION OF FREE OPINION. AND WE SHALL GO ON HAVING TO MAKE THAT POINT. IT IS A FUNDAMENTAL POINT.

MIMI YEUNG: BUT DO YOU THINK THAT IT WILL STAND IN THE WAY OF GOOD SINO-HONG KONG-BRITISH RELATIONS?

MR HURD: I CAN'T REALLY HELP THE CHINESE ON THAT POINT. I MEAN. THIS IS AN ABSOLUTELY BASIC POINT. WHETHER IT STANDS IN THE WAY DEPENDS ON THEM. I HAVE NO POWER, AND THE GOVERNOR HAS NO POWER, - AND THANK GOD - TO SUPPRESS SUCH ORGANISATIONS; THAT'S NOT WHAT HONG KONG IS ABOUT.

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CHARLES WALLACE (LOS ANGELES TIMES): WILL BRITAIN AND THE HONG KONG AUTHORITIES NOW PRESS AHEAD WITH MANDATORY REPATRIATION, OR ARE YOU PREPARED TO ACCEPT A DELAY IN FURTHER MANDATORY REPATRIATION AND GIVE THE VOLUNTARY PROGRAMME A CHANCE, IN ORDER TO GET THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY AND THE UNITED STATES TO COME ON SIDE WITH YOUR PROGRAMME?

MR HURD: I'M ALL IN FAVOUR OF THE VOLUNTARY PROGRAMME. AND AS YOU KNOW, IT'S GOING AHEAD: I THINK THERE WAS ANOTHER PLANELOAD YESTERDAY. SO I'M ALL IN FAVOUR OF THAT AND DISCUSSED IT WITH THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNHCR TODAY WHEN I HAD A BRIEF WORD WITH HIM, SO I'M ALL IN FAVOUR OF THAT. BUT THE TROUBLE IS THAT, PEOPLE WHO ARE SCREENED OUT, WHO, AFTER THE SCREENING HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED ARE NOT REFUGEES, ARE BY AND LARGE NOT VOLUNTEERING. AND THEREFORE, IT WAS BECAUSE THE VOLUNTEERING PROGRAMME WAS NOT COPING TO ANY EXTENT WITH THOSE WHO IT HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED WERE NOT REFUGEES, THAT I FELT BOUND TO AGREE THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF HONG KONG SHOULD REPATRIATE A PLANELOAD BEFORE CHRISTMAS. NOW, NO DATE HAS BEEN FIXED FOR FUTURE PLANELOADS. BUT I DON'T SEE ANYTHING ON THE IMMEDIATE HORIZON WHICH WOULD ENABLE US TO ALTER THAT POLICY. NOT BECAUSE WE LOVE THE POLICY OF REPATRIATION, IT'S AN EXTREMELY DIFFICULT ONE, BUT BECAUSE I DON'T SEE AT THE MOMENT, ANOTHER WAY OF MAKING IT CLEAR THAT MOVING FROM VIETNAM TO HONG KONG, MAKING IT CLEAR THAT THAT IS NOT A ROAD TO RESETTLEMENT IN THE WEST AND TO A HAPPIER LIFE.

K.Y. LAU (RTHK): SOME OMELCO MEMBERS HAVE POINTED OUT THAT THE SUGGESTION OF A TWO-CHAMBER SYSTEM FOR FUTURE LEGISLATURE WILL MAKE CONVERGENCY IMPOSSIBLE. WILL BRITAIN REQUEST CHINA NOT TO ADOPT THIS MODEL OF LEGISLATURE AFTER 1997?

MR HURD: WELL, I THINK IT IS TRUE THAT THERE HAS BEEN SUCH CLOSE CONCENTRATION ON THE OPENING NUMBERS FOR 1991 IN THE CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM, THAT OTHER PARTS OF IT, OTHER ASPECTS OF IT, HAVE NOT PERHAPS RECEIVED ALL THE ATTENTION THEY MIGHT HAVE IN PUBLIC. BUT THE DISCUSSIONS WE'VE HAD, THE DISCUSSIONS I'VE HAD WITH OMELCO, THE POINTS RAISED WITH ME HERE, AND THE POINTS WHICH HAVE BEEN DISCUSSED WITH THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC. GO WIDER AND THEY COVER THE KIND OF POINT YOU MENTION.

KEVIN LAU (HK ECONOMIC JOURNAL): IF THE BEST WAY IN POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT IS TO AGREE ON SOMETHING THAT WILL CONTINUE, WILL YOU DO THE SAME IN ENACTING THE BILL OF RIGHTS, NAMELY, TO AMEND THE LETTERS PATENT BY MIRROR-IMAGING ARTICLE 39 OF THE BASIC LAW, SO THAT THE BILL OF RIGHTS COULD BE SAFELY ENTRENCHED BY THE LETTERS PATENT BEFORE 1997. AND BY THE ARTICLE 39 OF THE BASIC LAW AFTER 1997?

AND ON CONSULAR PROTECTION, THOSE PEOPLE WHO'VE GOT BRITISH NATIONALITY ARE STILL CHINESE NATIONALS UNDER CHINESE NATIONALITY LAW. AND THE CASE OF DUAL-NATIONALITY BRITAIN HAS NO GENUINE AND EFFECTIVE LINK WITH THOSE PEOPLE BECAUSE THEY HAVE ALL THEIR FRIENDS AND PROPERTIES HERE. SO HOW COULD BRITAIN CLAIM DIPLOMATIC PROTECTION OVER THEM AFTER 1997?

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MR HURD: MY UNDERSTANDING IS THAT THEY WOULD NOT HAVE DUAL-NATIONALITY AND THAT THEY THEREFORE WOULD BE ENTITLED TO CONSULAR PROTECTION. THAT IS A MATTER OF CHINESE LAW, BUT I BELIEVE THAT WAS I'VE SAID IS RIGHT.

ON THE FIRST POINT, I REGARD THAT AS A MATTER FOR THE INSTITUTIONS OF HONG KONG. IT'S BEING DISCUSSED. OUR CONCERN HAS BEEN THAT THERE SHOULD BE A BILL OF RIGHTS, I THINK THAT THAT'S RIGHT, AND THAT THE DRAFT BASIC LAW SHOULD INCLUDE PROTECTION FOR THE TWO RELEVANT UNITED NATIONS COVENANTS. ARTICLE 39 DOES DO SO. HOW THAT IS REFLECTED... IT'S NOT PARALLEL TO THE QUESTION OF CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT. IT DOES SO, I MEAN IT IS THERE IN THE DRAFT BASIC LAW, AND HOW THAT IS REFLECTED IN THE BILL OF RIGHTS AND IN THE ARRANGEMENTS BETWEEN NOW AND 1997, IS A MATTER FOR HONG KONG TO DECIDE.

KEVIN LAU: AND NOT, REALLY, BECAUSE ENTRENCHMENT OF THE BILL IS A CONSTITUTIONAL MATTER, AN AMENDMENT OF THE LETTERS PATENT MUST BE DONE BY THE FOREIGN OFFICE, BY THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT. IT'S NOT FOR THE HONG KONG INSTITUTION TO DO IT.

MR HURD: WELL, IF THE RESULT OF THE DISCUSSIONS IN HONG KONG IS THAT WE ARE REQUESTED TO DO THAT, WELL THEN OF COURSE WE WILL CONSIDER THAT. BUT THAT IS PART OF THE DISCUSSION TAKING PLACE HERE, AS TO WHETHER WE ARE ASKED TO DO THAT. OUR CONCERN IS, FIRSTLY, THAT THERE SHOULD BE A BILL OF RIGHTS - THAT'S THE GENERAL IDEA WHICH WE'VE PUT FORWARD - AND SECONDLY, THAT THE DRAFT BASIC LAW SHOULD CONTINUE TO GIVE PROTECTION TO INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE TWO UN COVENANTS. IF WE'RE ASKED TO ALTER THE LETTERS PATENT, WE WILL CONSIDER THAT. THAT HASN'T YET HAPPENED.

JULIE MAPLESTON (ATV): I APPRECIATE THAT A DECISION ON THE POLITICAL REFORMS IN HONG KONG IS SOME WEEKS OFF, BUT CAN YOU INDICATE WHAT IS THE MINIMUM NUMBER OF SEATS THAT WOULD BE ENOUGH TO PREVENT AN EROSION OF CONFIDENCE IN HONG KONG'S POLITICAL SYSTEM?

MR HURD: NOW THAT IS A BRAVE EFFORT. BUT THE ANSWER IS: NOT THIS AFTERNOON.

EDDIE YUEN (WEN WEI PO): BACK TO THE RIGHT OF ABODE QUESTION. WOULD YOU SAY THAT GIVING A CONSIDERABLE NUMBER OF CIVIL SERVANTS THE FULL CITIZENSHIP OF THE UK WOULD BE BENEFICIAL TO THE PROSPERITY AND STABILITY OF HONG KONG AFTER 1997?

MR HURD: YES, I THINK IT WOULD ENABLE SUCH PEOPLE - GIVE THEM CONFIDENCE TO REMAIN HERE AND CONTINUE TO DO THE KEY JOBS WHICH THEY AT PRESENT HOLD. THAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE PACKAGE AND IT APPLIES WITHIN THE NUMBERS THAT YOU KNOW OF, TO THE PUBLIC SERVICES AS WELL AS TO THE PRIVATE SECTOR.

EDDIE YUEN: A FOLLOW UP QUESTION: WHAT IF THEY LEAVE ALL AT A TIME?

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MR HURD: IF THEY LEAVE, THEY LEAVE. WE CAN'T IMPRISON THEM HERE AND THAT IS NOT THE INTENTION OF THE PACKAGE. THE INTENTION IS TO GIVE THEM SUFFICIENT CONFIDENCE TO STAY.

PAUL HARRINGTON (HK STANDARD): MR HURD, HAS YOUR BRIEF VISIT, APART FROM ENCOURAGING YOU ON THE CHANGES IN THE INFRASTRUCTURE, HAS IT CHANGED YOUR OPINIONS OF HONG KONG AT ALL?

MR HURD: I DON'T THINK IT HAS, REALLY. BUT UP TO NOW -- I CAME HERE AS A YOUNG DIPLOMAT MANY TIMES, REALLY, FROM PEKING, BUT I WASN'T INVOLVED IN ALL THE EXCITEMENTS OF GOVERNMENT OF HONG KONG. I WAS PETRIFIED AT GOING TO GOVERNMENT HOUSE - THAT I READILY RECALL. AFTER THAT, I CAME HERE WITH MR HEATH, AND I CAME HERE WITH MRS THATCHER - SUCH HAS BEEN THE VARIETY OF MY POLITICAL LIFE - BUT THOSE AGAIN WERE SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT OCCASIONS. I MEAN THIS IS THE FIRST TIME WHICH I HAVE REALLY BEEN IMMersed - SHALL WE PUT IT IN THAT WAY - IMMersed IN HONG KONG AND MET SO MANY HONG KONG PEOPLE, AND I'VE THOROUGHLY ENJOYED THAT.

PATRICIA LEUNG (TIN TIN DAILY NEWS): DO YOU AGREE THAT PROVISION NUMBER 23 OF THE BASIC LAW DRAFT WILL MUCH TIGHTEN THE CONTROL OF THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT OVER THE SAR GOVERNMENT SO THAT IT WILL AFFECT THE AUTONOMY OF THE SAR GOVERNMENT? AND WILL YOU TRY TO RAISE ANY SUGGESTION TO IMPROVE THAT?

MR HURD: WELL I THINK I HAVE ANSWERED, AS FAR AS I CAN. QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STATE OF THE BASIC DRAFT LAW. WE'RE NOT NEGOTIATORS ROUND THAT TABLE. WE HAVE TAKEN OPPORTUNITIES, AND WILL CONTINUE SO LONG AS THAT IS POSSIBLE, TO EXPRESS OUR VIEWS PRIVATELY ABOUT THE CONTENT OF THE LAW, AND WE'VE TAKEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPRESS TO THE CHINESE CERTAIN OPINIONS WHICH WE'VE FORWARDED BECAUSE WE'VE RECEIVED THEM FROM HERE.

CHEUNG KIT-FUNG (ASIAWEEK): SOME PEOPLE HAVE VIEWED YOUR TRIP AS A SUCCESSFUL PR EXERCISE. DO YOU THINK THAT IS A FAIR JUDGEMENT? AND NUMBER TWO, WHAT ARE THE MAIN PRIORITIES THAT YOU WILL CARRY BACK TO LONDON?

MR HURD: IT'S A HARD LIFE, ISN'T IT? I MEAN, IF YOU DON'T SEE THE MEDIA. IF YOU'VE DASHED PAST THEM AT ALL THE STREET CORNERS WHERE YOU'VE COLLECTED - IN THE RAIN SOMETIMES - IF YOU DO ALL THAT YOU'RE ACCUSED OF BEING HAUGHTY AND ARROGANT AND NEGLECTFUL. IF YOU DO PAUSE AND ANSWER QUESTIONS AT EVERY STREET CORNER, YOU'RE TOLD YOU'RE ON A PR TRIP. I'VE LONG AGO LEARNED, YOU CAN'T WIN IN THESE EXCHANGES. I'VE TRIED TO DO MY BEST AND I WILL CARRY BACK TO LONDON A LOT OF VERY SPECIFIC OPINIONS - WHICH ARE OBVIOUSLY MUCH MORE VIVID IF THEY ARE EXPRESSED TO YOU DIRECTLY - A LOT OF VERY SPECIFIC OPINIONS, NOT ALL OF THEM HARMONIOUS, NOT ALL OF THEM THE SAME. BUT ALSO AN IMPRESSION OF A TERRITORY, A HUGE MAJORITY OF WHOSE CITIZENS, WHOSE PEOPLE, ARE WORKING HARD AS THEY HAVE ALWAYS DONE, FOR A FUTURE WHICH COULD BE AMAZING. BUT THE HARD WORK, THE IMAGINATION, THE EXPECTATIONS FOR THE FUTURE, GO ALONGSIDE THE ANXIETIES OF THE PRESENT, AND THAT'S THE IMPRESSION I'LL CARRY BACK.

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