



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

19 November 1984

Dear Charles,

Prime Minister's Visit to Far East and United States:
Timings - attached

In your letter of today's date to Len Appleyard, you asked us to look at options for reconciling the Prime Minister's present programme in Peking and Hong Kong with President Reagan's proposal for talks and lunch at Camp David on the morning of Saturday 22 December.

There are in practice three options:

- (i) moving the whole Peking/Hong Kong visit forward by 24 hours.

Advantage: The Prime Minister would be able to arrive in Washington on the evening of Friday 21 December and get a night's sleep before seeing the President as suggested on the morning of 22 December.

Disadvantage: The Prime Minister would have to miss PM's Questions on 18 December, and any engagements she may have on the morning of that day.

We would also have to ask the Chinese to move the signature ceremony forward a day. Without having consulted them, we do not believe that this should cause major difficulties. In confirming that the Chinese could accept the Prime Minister's visit on the dates we proposed, Zhou Nan said that the dates "fell within Premier Zhao's preferred period for the visit" which suggests that they have some flexibility on either side. We can see no reason why moving the visit to Hong Kong forward a day should cause the Governor in Hong Kong any problem. Dates have not been announced.

- (ii) Leaving the dates for Peking/Hong Kong as they are, but moving the proposed press conference in Hong Kong to the early evening of Friday 21 December, and leaving Hong Kong immediately after the Governor's dinner late on 21 December (departure at 2230 would give an arrival of 0935 at Andrews Air Force Base, Washington).

/Advantage



Advantage: No dislocation of existing arrangements: the Prime Minister could do PM's Questions.

Disadvantage: The programme would be even tighter. In particular, the Prime Minister would not get a proper night's sleep before her talks with President Reagan on 22 December. In addition, the Prime Minister's visit to Hong Kong would be extremely short, and there would be a real risk of giving the impression that Hong Kong's interests were being subordinated to other matters.

- (iii) Asking the President to amend his invitation to the Prime Minister, preferably to an offer of dinner at Camp David on the evening of 22 December.

Advantage: Again, no dislocation. The Prime Minister would have a night's sleep in Hong Kong before the long flight to Washington.

Disadvantage: The President would have to be asked to change his invitation: he may have some other engagement that evening.

I have spoken to Sir Percy Cradock, who sees no overriding difficulty in going back to the Chinese to seek a change in the date for the signature ceremony in Peking, to enable us to take up option (i) above, if that is what the Prime Minister wishes.

Yes
aw,
Pete Ricketts

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Private Secretary

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