

~~27/25~~
~~35/25~~

confidential filing.

Five Power Defence Arrangements,
joint exercises proposed by Mr. Fraser, PM of Australia.

COMMONWEALTH.

September 1980.

Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date
11-9-80							
17-9-80							
18.9.80							
24.9.80							
7.10.80							

PREM 19/156



Commonwealth

10, DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

7 October, 1980.

My dear High Commissioner,

Thank you for your letter of 3 October, and for the enclosed signed original of Mr. Fraser's message to the Prime Minister of 25 September.

Yours sincerely

Michael Alexander

His Excellency Sir James Plimsoll, AC, CBE.

LB



AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION · LONDON

AUSTRALIA HOUSE STRAND WC2B 4LA TEL. 01-438 8209

THE HIGH COMMISSIONER

3 October, 1980

Dear Mr Alexander,

I have been asked by the Australian Prime Minister, The Rt. Hon. Malcolm Fraser, to convey the enclosed letter from him dated 25 September, 1980 to your Prime Minister, The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher.

It is the original of the letter on Five-Power Defence Arrangements of which I sent you a telegraphed text on 24 September.

Yours sincerely,

(J. Plimsoll)

Mr Michael Alexander,
Private Secretary (Overseas Affairs)
to the Prime Minister,
Prime Minister's Office,
10 Downing Street,
London, SW1.

PRIME MINISTER'S

PERSONAL MESSAGE

SERIAL No. T181/80



(Subject copy
Filed under
24.9.80)

A

PRIME MINISTER

CANBERRA

25 SEP 1980

By Lee Razent

Thank you for your message of 11 September 1980 in reply to my letter about multi-national exercises under the auspices of the Five Power Defence Arrangements. I was most encouraged to receive such a prompt and positive response.

I also received a similarly positive reaction from our colleagues, the Prime Ministers of Malaysia and Singapore, and the Acting Prime Minister of New Zealand, as a result of which I was able to inform the House of Representatives last week about the agreement that the Five Power partners had reached to resume exercises. I imagine that you will have received the text of my statement from your High Commissioner here.

I am delighted that you wish to have the United Kingdom join with us and the other Five Power members in revitalising the Arrangements and that you agree in principle that combined exercises be developed. Your willingness to have the United Kingdom participate in officials' talks to prepare for the exercises is also very welcome. Perhaps these talks could be held after the Secretaries of the Australian Departments of Defence and Foreign Affairs and the Chief of the Australian Defence Force Staff return from discussions that they will shortly be having with Malaysia and Singapore.

I quite understand the difficulties that the United Kingdom might have in making a commitment of forces to participation in the exercises, but I should also say that any substantive support you might be able to provide would be warmly appreciated, not only by Australia but also by our other Five Power partners.

You Sir

The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher, M.P.,
Prime Minister of Great Britain,
LONDON
UNITED KINGDOM

Margaret Thatcher

Commonwealth

CONFIDENTIAL

RS



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

24 September 1980

I enclose a copy of a letter from the Australian Prime Minister to the Prime Minister in response to her message of 11 September about multi-national exercises under the auspices of the Five Power Defence arrangements.

I should be grateful for advice as to whether a further response at Prime Ministerial level is required.

I am sending copies of this letter and enclosure to Brian Norbury (Ministry of Defence) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

M. A. PATTISON

Paul Lever, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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Man



DS

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

24 September 1980

In Michael Alexander's absence overseas with the Prime Minister, I am writing to acknowledge your letter of 24 September with which you enclosed the text of one from the Australian Prime Minister to Mrs. Thatcher.

I will of course bring this to the Prime Minister's attention on her return from Yugoslavia.

M. A. PATTISON

His Excellency Sir James Plimsoll, A.C., C.B.E.

NPAM

CONFIDENTIAL



AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION · LONDON

THE HIGH COMMISSIONER

24 September 1980

Submitted to PM

Plim

Dear Mr Alexander,

I have been asked by the Australian Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. Malcolm Fraser, to convey the enclosed text of a letter from him to your Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher.

I should be grateful if you could bring this letter to Mrs Thatcher's attention as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

J. Plimsoll

(J. Plimsoll)

Mr Michael Alexander,
Private Secretary (Overseas Affairs)
to the Prime Minister,
Prime Minister's Office,
10, Downing Street,
LONDON SW1.

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Text of a Letter dated 24 September 1980 from
the Rt. Hon. Malcolm Fraser, Prime Minister of
Australia to the Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher

PRIME MINISTER'S

PERSONAL MESSAGE

SERIAL No. T181/80.

My dear Margaret,

Prime Minister (2)
I don't know whether you need write again,
but FCO are considering.
Mackayson m
Ans 26/x

Thank you for your message of 11 September, 1980,
in reply to my letter about multi-national exercises under
the auspices of the Five Power Defence arrangements. I was
most encouraged to receive such a prompt and positive
response.

I also received a similarly positive reaction
from our colleagues, the Prime Ministers of Malaysia and
Singapore, and the Acting Prime Minister of New Zealand, as
a result of which I was able to inform the House of
Representatives last week about the agreement that the Five
Power partners had reached to resume exercises. I might
imagine that you will have received the text of my statement
from your High Commissioner here.

I am delighted that you wish to have the United
Kingdom join with us and the other Five Power members in
revitalising the arrangements and that you agree in principle
that combined exercises be developed. Your willingness to
have the United Kingdom participate in Officials' Talks to
prepare for the exercises is also very welcome. Perhaps
these talks could be held after the Secretaries of the
Australian Departments of Defence and Foreign Affairs and the
Chief of the Australian Defence Force Staff return from
discussions that they will shortly be having with Malaysia
and Singapore.

I quite understand the difficulties that the United
Kingdom might have in making a commitment of forces to
participation in the exercises, but I should also say that
any substantive support you might be able to provide would be
warmly appreciated, not only by Australia but also by our
other Five Power partners.

Yours sincerely,

Malcolm Fraser

CONFIDENTIAL

File Common-wealth
DSG

18 September 1980.

I enclose a copy of a letter to
the Prime Minister from the Australian
High Commissioner, received today.

M. A. PATTISON

Roderic Lyne, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

18 September 1980

In Michael Alexander's absence in Paris with the Prime Minister, I am writing to thank you for your letter of 18 September, with which you enclosed the text of the statement made in the House of Representatives by the Rt. Hon. Malcolm Fraser today.

I will ensure that the Prime Minister sees this as soon as she returns to London.

M.A. PATTISON

His Excellency Sir James Plimsoll, A.C., C.B.E.

JSP

TEXT OF STATEMENT FROM THE PRIME MINISTER OF
AUSTRALIA, THE RT. HON. MALCOLM FRASER, TO
PARLIAMENT ON 18 SEPTEMBER 1980.

I informed the House on 19 February 1980, when I outlined the Government's response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, that we intended discussing with our regional friends the further development of our defence relations with them. One of the specific measures that I mentioned then was combined exercises between the Australian Defence Force and forces of our South East Asian neighbours. The resilience of independent regional countries is an important element in contributing to regional stability, and the abiding security interests we have in common with our neighbours call for continuing consultation and cooperation in the defence field. The Government regards such cooperation as a long-term measure of major importance.

I am pleased to be able to inform Honourable Members that I took the opportunity during the recent Commonwealth Heads of Government Regional Meeting in New Delhi to hold further consultations on defence matters with the Prime Minister of Malaysia, Datuk Hussein Onn, and with the Prime Minister of Singapore, Mr Lee Kuan Yew. We all agreed that all three countries would gain much from the conduct of our respective defence forces of multinational exercises. It was agreed that we should initially look to conducting these under the auspices of the Five Power Arrangements.

Since returning from New Delhi, I have consulted with my British and New Zealand colleagues. They have indicated that they endorse what is proposed. There is therefore now agreement in principle between all partners of the Five Power Arrangements.

Honourable Members may be aware that the last major exercise involving all participants in the Five Power Arrangements, including both ground and air forces, took place in 1970. More limited air defence exercises are regularly held in the Malaysia and Singapore area and there are frequent bilateral exercises involving ground forces of the various participants. For example, today there are Singapore soldiers in Townsville preparing to take part in an exercise with Australian troops. An infantry company of the Malaysian Army took part in a similar exercise in Australia in May-June last year.

Now that we are all agreed that exercises having a more distinctive multinational character should be re-instituted, we shall be taking early action towards this end. I have given instructions that Australia should move with full vigour to help put the agreement into practical effect.

Singapore recently requested that the Singapore Armed Forces be permitted to carry out their own training exercises in agreed training areas in Australia. A small country, Singapore faces exceptional difficulties in finding adequate training space for its armed forces on its own territory.

The Singapore request is for facilities to enable them to exercise their Commanders and Units of their ground forces. Some naval training and air crew training is also envisaged. Included in the last-named is a request to deploy and maintain at Nowra Naval Air Station a small number of Skyhawk aircraft to facilitate advanced pilot training.

We have been pleased to agree to Singapore forces conducting training exercises in Australia and have also agreed to their specific request to deploy Skyhawk aircraft to Nowra.

All this has been discussed with Malaysia as a member of the Five Power Arrangements.

I have already emphasised Australia's abiding interest in the security of the area to our north.

The Government is prepared to give sympathetic consideration to meeting the special needs of other regional countries. Indeed, I made this clear during my discussions in New Delhi.

We are exploring with the Malaysian and Singapore Governments arrangements for high-level talks on a broad range of matters in the defence field including those I have already referred to. I have indicated to Prime Minister Hussein Onn and to Prime Minister Lee our readiness to have the Secretaries of the Departments of Defence and Foreign Affairs and the Chief of the Defence Force Staff visit Kuala Lumpur and Singapore for such discussions at an early date.



cc FCO

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PRIME MINISTER'S
PERSONAL MESSAGE

10 DOWNING STREET SERIAL No. 1177/80

THE PRIME MINISTER

17 September 1980

My dear Prime Minister,

Thank you for your message of 11 September describing your discussions with the Prime Ministers of Malaysia and Singapore about possible multi-national exercises under the auspices of the Five Power Defence Arrangements (FPDA).

You will remember that after our talk on the FPDA in London earlier this year, we stressed the importance which we attached to the support from regional members for any initiative to revitalise the FPDA. I was therefore particularly pleased to hear that Hussein Onn and Lee Kuan Yew had welcomed the idea of joint exercises.

Subject to our available resources, and as you know they are very stretched, the United Kingdom would certainly wish to play its part in breathing life into the FPDA. Because we no longer maintain substantial forces in the area, we can not commit ourselves to participating in any exercises until their form and timing are clearer; but we are, of course, entirely willing to take part in official talks to consider possible exercises.

We certainly have no objection to your proposal to make an announcement in the Australian Parliament.

Yours sincerely
Malcolm Fraser

The Right Honourable Malcolm Fraser, C.H., M.P.

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17 September 1980

I should be grateful if you could convey to Mr. Fraser the attached reply from the Prime Minister to his message about the Five Power Defence arrangements.

MODBA

His Excellency Sir James Plimsoll, A.C., C.B.E.

SECRET

BB

From: Colin V Balmer, Private Secretary



CONFIDENTIAL

MINISTER OF STATE FOR DEFENCE

WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2HB

Telephone 01-218 6621 (Direct Dialling)
01-218 9000 (Switchboard)

*WDBH seen to
As 17.9.*

CONFIDENTIAL

D/MIN/ES/8/2

16 September 1980

Dear Rodwick

Brian Norbury passed to me Michael Alexander's letter of 11th September asking for advice on Mr Fraser's letter to the Prime Minister in which he seeks agreement to announce the planned holding of joint exercises under the Five Power Defence Arrangements.

Officials of our two Departments had earlier discussed a number of possible measures to breathe life into the Arrangements, including the holding of exercises. Now that both Malaysia and Singapore appear to favour joint exercises, we are certainly ready to engage in discussions with our partners to see what might be arranged. Our resources are, of course, limited and largely committed elsewhere, so United Kingdom participation in any such exercises is likely to depend heavily on the resources available in the area at the time.

As I have already mentioned on the telephone, Lord Strathcona has seen, and is content with, the draft reply to Mr Fraser.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Michael Alexander.

Yours sincerely

Colin Balmer

Roderick Lyne Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

17 SEP 1980



SECRET

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

16 September 1980

Dear Michael,

Type for signature

Five Power Defence Agreements

You wrote on 11 September to Stephen Gomersall enclosing a copy of the message to the Prime Minister from the Australian Prime Minister proposing the holding of joint exercises under the auspices of the Five Power Defence Arrangements (FPDA).

You will remember that Mr Fraser raised the topic of "breathing life" into the FPDA when he met the Prime Minister in February this year. Following those talks we told the Australians that:

- a) we should be pleased to play our part within the limits of available resources;
- b) in our view any initiative should come from the regional members.

It is not clear from Mr Fraser's letter whether he proposes to announce a decision to hold exercises, talks about exercises, or both. Whatever the intention, the Australians have told our High Commission in Kuala Lumpur that Hussein Onn has agreed to the announcement. The New Zealanders have informed our High Commission in Singapore that the Singaporeans have endorsed the proposal and are likely to agree to Fraser's proposed statement. We do not know the New Zealand reaction but they are unlikely to object.

Politically we consider we should welcome any measures to "breathe life" into the FPDA. But we no longer maintain substantial forces permanently in the area, and we could not commit ourselves to participating in exercises until we know the form and timing of them. We suggest therefore that in her answer to Mr Fraser the Prime Minister should express our willingness to discuss with our FPDA partners any proposals for holding joint exercises.

/I attach

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/ I attach a draft reply which has been cleared with the Ministry of Defence and, I understand, approved by Lord Strathcona. You may wish to send the reply through the Australian High Commission in London.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Brian Norbury in the Ministry of Defence and David Wright in the Cabinet Office.

yours ever
Roderic Lyne

(R M J Lyne)
Private Secretary

Michael Alexander Esq
10 Downing Street
London

SECRET

DRAFT: minute/letter/teleletter/despatch/note

TYPE: Draft/Final 1+

FROM:
Prime Minister

Reference

DEPARTMENT:

TEL. NO:

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

TO:

Your Reference

- Top Secret
- Secret
- Confidential
- Restricted
- Unclassified

Rt Hon Malcolm Fraser

Copies to:

PRIVACY MARKING

SUBJECT:

.....In Confidence

Thank you for your message of 11 September describing your discussions with the Prime Ministers of Malaysia and Singapore about possible multi-national exercises under the auspices of the Five Power Defence Arrangements (FPDA).

CAVEAT.....

You will remember that after our talk on the FPDA in London earlier this year, we stressed the importance which we attached to the support from regional members for any initiative to revitalise the FPDA. I was therefore particularly pleased to hear that Hussein Onn and Lee Kuan Yew had welcomed the idea of joint exercises.

Subject to our available resources, and as you know the they are very stretched, the United Kingdom would certainly wish to play its part in breathing life into the FPDA. Because we no longer maintain substantial forces in the area, we can not commit ourselves to participating in any exercises until their form and timing are clearer; but we are, of course, entirely willing to take part in official talks to consider possible exercises.

Enclosures—flag(s).....

/We certainly

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We certainly have no objection to your proposal
to make an announcement in the Australian Parliament..

DRAFT: minute/letter/teleletter/despatch/note

TYPE: Draft/Final 1+

FROM:

Reference

PS/No 10

DEPARTMENT:

TEL. NO:

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

TO:

Your Reference

- Top Secret
- Secret
- Confidential
- Restricted
- Unclassified

HE Sir James Plimsoll AC CBE
 Australian High Commission
 Australia House Strand

Copies to:

PRIVACY MARKING

SUBJECT:

.....In Confidence

CAVEAT.....

I should be grateful if you could convey to Mr Fraser the attached reply from the Prime Minister to his message about the Five Power Defence arrangements.

Enclosures—flag(s).....



SECRET

RH

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Commonwealth

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

11 September, 1980

I enclose a copy of a message which the Prime Minister has received this afternoon from the Prime Minister of Australia proposing the holding of joint exercises under the auspices of the Five Power Defence Arrangements. As you will see, Mr Fraser proposes to make an announcement about this on Thursday next 18 September.

I should be grateful for a draft reply which the Prime Minister might send to Mr Fraser. Clearly this should reach me as soon as possible and in any case no later than 16 September.

I am sending copies of this letter to Brian Norbury (Ministry of Defence) and David Wright (Cabinet Office).

M. O'D. B. ALEXANDER

S J Gomersall, Esq
Lord Privy Seal's Office

SECRET

MPM

11 September, 1980

Thank you for your letter of 11 September enclosing a letter to the Prime Minister from the Australian Prime Minister. I have, of course, brought Mr Fraser's letter to Mrs Thatcher's immediate attention.

M. O'D. B. ALEXANDER

His Excellency Sir James Plimsoll, AC, CBE

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AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION · LONDON

THE HIGH COMMISSIONER

11 September 1980

Dear Mr Alexander,

I have been asked by the Australian Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. Malcolm Fraser, to convey the enclosed text of a letter from him to your Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher.

I should be grateful if you could bring this letter to Mrs Thatcher's attention as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely
J. Plimsoll

(J. Plimsoll)

Mr Michael Alexander,
Private Secretary (Overseas Affairs)
to the Prime Minister,
Prime Minister's Office,
10 Downing Street,
LONDON, SW1

SECRET



THE HIGH COMMISSIONER

11 SEP 1980

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11 SEP 1980

PRIME MINISTER'S I

PERSONAL MESSAGE

TEXT OF A LETTER OF 11 SEPTEMBER
FROM THE PRIME MINISTER OF AUSTRALIA,
THE RT. HON. MALCOLM FRASER,
TO THE RT. HON. MARGARET THATCHER

SERIAL No. T172/80

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cc. Master set

of.

My Dear Prime Minister,

During the course of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Regional Meeting in New Delhi, both Prime Ministers Hussein Onn and Lee Kuan Yew discussed with me a range of subjects concerning defence cooperation in the region. One suggestion was that we should have joint multinational exercises under the auspices of the Five Power Defence Arrangements. Both Hussein Onn and Lee Kuan Yew were clearly attracted to this. Indeed, Hussein commented that he did not understand why such exercises had not been held in recent years.

For our part, we are anxious to develop such exercises and we have told the Malaysian and Singapore Prime Ministers that we would like to have official talks with them about this.

We very much hope that you will wish to have your own national forces participate in whatever combined exercises might be agreed upon, but that is a matter that can be taken up later. In the meantime, I would like to inform the Australian Parliament next Thursday that it is proposed to hold these exercises under the auspices of the Five Power Arrangements.

It would help me to know that you see no problem about a statement of this kind.

Yours sincerely,

(Malcolm Fraser)

Ends.

SECRET

