

SUBJECT

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PRIME MINISTER'S
PERSONAL MESSAGE
SERIAL No. T25A/797

Office of the Prime Minister,
Government House,
Bangkok, Thailand.

14 June B.E. 2522 (1979)

Excellency,

I have just learned through our Ambassador in London that the British Government has taken a keen interest in the refugee problem from Indochina. This information was conveyed to the five ASEAN ambassadors by Mr. H.A.H. Cortazzi, Deputy Under-Secretary of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, during a briefing and an exchange of views on this problem on 30th May 1979 at the Foreign Office. This is most gratifying for me to hear since this problem is presently the most pressing one for us. I should therefore not fail in bringing to your attention the latest development in this matter.

Following the armed invasion of Democratic Kampuchea by the Socialist Republic of Vietnam towards the end of December last year, incessant waves of illegal immigrants have fled across the border into Thailand. With the recent intensification of military operations by the Vietnamese side in the Western and South-western parts of Kampuchea, the influx of these uprooted persons has increased dramatically, sometimes each wave numbering tens of thousands. In fact, these recent arrivals number well over 80,000. This is over and above those who have already fled into Thailand, that is, 134,660 Laotian, 13,030 Kampuchean and

1,457 ...

Her Excellency
Mrs. Margaret H. Thatcher,
Prime Minister of United Kingdom
and Northern Ireland,
LONDON.

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1,457 Vietnamese, a total of 149,147. There are also 4,349 boat-people. Such a large number of displaced persons well exceeds the limits of our capacity to bear with, economically and socially; posing also a grave threat to our national security.

What is especially disturbing is that we have reason to believe that the Vietnamese Government is organizing this "human export," who are mostly of Chinese origin, from both former South Vietnam and Kampuchea to serve a two-fold purpose, namely getting rid of undesirables of Chinese origin and at the same time inflicting on Thailand onerous economic, social and security burdens. It is also suspected that the Vietnamese have the intention to let the entire Kampuchean population perish through famine and starvation and replace them with Vietnamese emigrants. It is therefore imperative that this problem should be solved not only insofar as where these displaced persons may be but also at its source. This opinion, I believe, is shared by the British Government. Our own population especially near the border are becoming increasingly dissatisfied with these illegal immigrants because, for example, their houses and properties are damaged or stolen by the illegal immigrants or in some instances even forced to abandon their homes. Despite a great deal of expressions of good intention, appropriate actions and assistance have not been forthcoming sufficiently from the world community. The Government of Thailand has always been guided by humanitarian considerations in dealing with these illegal immigrants. However, in view of the aggravating circumstances which now imperil our national security, it has become an absolute necessity for the Government of Thailand to repatriate these refugees to their place of origin.

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Turning to the situation in general, there are indications that Vietnam may launch an armed incursion into Thailand across the Thai-Kampuchean border, although initially this may be limited in scope and under the pretext of "hot pursuit". It is noteworthy that lately both Phnom-Penh and Hanoi have been quite vocal and strident in their accusations that Thailand has not been strictly neutral and is helping the Pol Pot forces. Should such an incursion by Vietnamese forces occur, armed clashes with Thai Forces would be inevitable and could lead to uncontrolled uncontroable escalation of conflicts. Such an eventuality would gravely endanger peace and stability of the entire Southeast Asian region, let alone world peace. Facing with these new challenges, the Government of Thailand is still determined to exercise a policy of restraint and moderation, but as a sovereign country, Thailand will not and cannot allow its integrity to be violated.

It is therefore heartening and gratifying to learn that peace-loving nations like Great Britain share our concern and are exerting increasing efforts to help solve this problem and to ensure that peace and stability be restored to our region. In this connection, the Government of Thailand gives its full support to the British Government's proposal to the United Nations Secretary-General to convene another U.N. conference on the Indochinese refugees as soon as possible. For our part, as Thailand is the principal country which bears the brunt of this problem, the Thai Government would like to offer Bangkok as the venue of the said conference. It is also our view that, for this conference to be successful, the major powers, the ASEAN member countries and all parties to the present conflicts in Indochina as well as other interested parties should be represented.

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Please accept, dear Prime Minister, my best wishes
for your continued good health and success.

Kchomanan.

General Kriangsak Chomanan
Prime Minister of Thailand

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