

PRIME MINISTER'S I

PERSONAL MESSAGE

SUBJECT.

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

SECRET

Begins:

cc. Master set

df.

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