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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.