

Aus/India

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

*Prime Minister,
further supplementary briefs.**Duty Clerk 1/2 -*

1 February 1980

*Dear Michael,*Visit by Australian Prime Minister

When Mr Fraser met President Carter and Secretary Vance on his brief visit to Washington on 31 January, he discussed recent events in Afghanistan and the Gulf area. Mr Fraser made it clear that the Australians wished to discourage any repetition of the Soviet action. The Australians would like to become more involved in the Indian Ocean. They are considering an increase in defence spending partly so that they can assist the Americans in the Indian Ocean. The Americans have responded warmly to the suggestion.

The Prime Minister may wish to ask Mr Fraser for his impressions and to discuss Western options in the area. I therefore attach a supplementary brief.

*yours ever
Roderic Lyne*

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Private Secretary

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LONDON

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PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH MR FRASER: 4 FEBRUARY 1980

SUPPLEMENTARY BRIEF: INDIAN OCEAN

POINTS TO MAKE

1. Should be interested in your account of talk with President Carter on the Indian Ocean and the Gulf.
2. Officials here have had talks with American officials about US plans for increased American facilities on Diego Garcia and elsewhere in the area. We are anxious to be helpful.
3. We are also looking at what else we can do to support Western efforts in area by military training of local forces, supplying equipment. UK has very limited capabilities for deployment in the area (at present occasional ship and aircraft visits). We are looking at this.
4. We welcome Australian interest and hope they will also assist the American efforts.
5. Realise threat to area not confined to north west. Grateful for Australian views on Five Power Defence Arrangements (FPDA) and general support for ASEAN.

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PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH MR FRASER: 4 FEBRUARY 1980

ESSENTIAL FACTS

Diego Garcia

1. Talks were held with US officials on 26 January about the American plans for additional facilities in the Indian Ocean and the Gulf area. The Americans confirmed their plans for the improvements to their facilities on Diego Garcia which they planned before Afghanistan. They have told us that they want to expand these further by providing more repair facilities, greater stockpiling and provision of tranist accommodation for a brigade.

2. The Australians would welcome a more active US role. They are aware of the American proposal for Diego Garcia. The Australians have agreed to help the Americans by providing staging facilities at the Western Australia base at Coburn Sound. They could seek facilities at Diego Garcia.

Other Facilities

3. The Americans are looking at other possible facilities in the area notably at Masirah, Berbera and Mombasa. Mr Bartholomew (State Department) is due to visit Oman, Kenya and Somalia this week to pursue this. They will keep us informed. We have expressed our general sympathy for these plans. But we have stressed the need for careful presentation of them locally. Better facilities for the Americans would improve their reconnaissance capability which the Australians would welcome.

Indian Ocean Peace Zone (IOPZ)

4. The Australians are keen for us to join the UN Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean which is considering the IOPZ proposal made by Sri Lanka for the exclusion of the military forces of non littoral states. They have represented Western interests in the Committee and believe that without the presence of their Western allies, their ability to influence its decisions will diminish. For our part the US view is important. They do not want us to join the Committee. They are unlikely to take part. If the Americans do not join the Ad Hoc Committee, we may face a difficult decision.

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We are sending an observer to the February meeting of the Committee in New York.

UK Policy

5. We generally support the American stance. We would welcome participation from the Australians. We (and the Australians) can help to explain US intentions to those countries in the area with which we maintain especially close relations. Our aim is to support the Americans but to make sure that their proposals are implemented with the least possible damage to Western interests in the Indian Ocean area.

6. It is planned to deploy a Royal Navy Task Group to North East Asia via the Gulf and Indian Ocean between May and December this year. The itinerary has not yet been finalised.

7. The FPDA came into force in 1971. It involves UK, Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia and Singapore. The Australians for their part have aircraft and military personnel stationed in Singapore and Malaysia. The main effectively functioning feature of the FPDA is its Integrated Air Defence System, to which the UK contribute from RAF personnel (who are stationed at Butterworth).

Soviet Naval Presence in the Indian Ocean and Gulf

8. The size of the Russian fleet fluctuates. But they maintain a permanent presence there. At present it consists of a nuclear submarine and 8 warships.

US Naval Presence in the Indian Ocean and Gulf

9. There has been a permanent US naval presence since 1949. Normally it is 3 ships. Of recent years there have been 3 deployments a year by the US Pacific Fleet. The US plan to increase their presence to 5 ships and to deploy from the Pacific 4 times a year. The US presence now consists of the Aircraft Carrier Nimitz, Kitty Hawk and Medway, 3 Guided Missile Cruisers and 9 other ships.

10. A copy of Washington telno 505, reporting on part of Mr Fraser's visit to Washington is attached.

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Defence Department
1 February 1980

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TO IMMEDIATE FCO

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MY TELNO 505: AUSTRALIAN PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO WASHINGTON

1. GOMPERT (POLITICO/MILITARY BUREAU, STATE) HAS SINCE ADDED THE FOLLOWING DETAILS TO THE ACCOUNT CONTAINED IN TUR. DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE CLAYTOR TOLD FRASER THE AMERICANS WERE LOOKING FOR COOPERATION FROM AUSTRALIA OVER HOME PORTING FOR THE US NAVY, MORE JOINT EXERCISES AND POSSIBLE USE OF THE WEST COAST OF AUSTRALIA FOR MARINE AMPHIBIOUS EXERCISES. FRASER HAD REFERRED TO AUSTRALIA TAKING ON RESPONSIBILITY FOR SURVEILLANCE OF THE INDIAN OCEAN FROM THE STRAITS OF MALACCA TO SOUTHERN INDIA, AS WELL AS MAKING A LARGER EFFORT OVER SHIP VISITS TO INDIA (WHICH HE ASSUMED MIGHT BE MORE DIFFICULT FOR THE AMERICANS THEMSELVES TO CONDUCT). AUSTRALIA ALSO PLANNED TO GIVE MORE HELP TO ASEAN COUNTRIES, INCLUDING MILITARY ASSISTANCE, ESPECIALLY MILITARY TRAINING, AND TO INCREASE AUSTRALIAN ASSISTANCE TO SMALL SOUTH WEST PACIFIC ISLAND STATES, PARTICULARLY ECONOMIC AID. HE APPARENTLY STRUCK A NOTE OF CAUTION ON THE QUESTION OF RE-ARMING JAPAN.

2. GOMPERT MADE IT CLEAR THAT AUSTRALIA IS NOW INCREASINGLY REGARDED BY THE AMERICANS AS AN ELEMENT IN THEIR THINKING ABOUT JOINT EFFORTS IN THE INDIAN OCEAN AREA. N

3. RESIDENT CLERK PLEASE INFORM DEFENC DEPT AND SPD.

FCO PASS SAVING TOKYO.

HENDERSON

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