

SUBJECT
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PRIME MINISTER'S
PERSONAL MESSAGE
SERIAL No. *CE 748196*

JA

PC

10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

THE PRIME MINISTER

24 December 1986

Dear Prime Minister,

Thank you for your message giving us advance notice of your intention to withdraw your infantry battalion and support units from Singapore by the end of 1989.

I recognise that economic and political conditions in South East Asia have changed since you first established your presence in Singapore. But as you yourself acknowledge, there must be a danger that the withdrawal of your battalion and support units from Singapore could erode the atmosphere of confidence established under the Five Power Defence Arrangements unless other acceptable and tangible ways of demonstrating your concern for the security of the region can be found. I am therefore pleased to note that you propose to use the period between now and 1989 to examine other ways in which you can maintain programmes of assistance there.

I welcome your assurance that New Zealand wishes to remain an active member of the Five Power Defence Arrangements, to which it has made such a significant contribution over so many years, and look forward to continuing our cooperation in this area.

I shall, as you request, keep the contents of your letter, and of this reply, confidential.

Yours sincerely

Raymond Shabari

DAS

The Rt. Hon. D. R. Lange.

CFE



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

23 December 1986

*Dear Charles,*New Zealand: Five Power Defence Arrangements

Your letter of ^{at 11 ap} 15 December enclosed a copy of a message to the Prime Minister from Mr Lange, giving notice of New Zealand's intention to withdraw its battalion stationed in Singapore by the end of 1989. I enclose a draft reply.

The Five Power Defence Arrangements (FPDA), established in 1971, commit the UK, Australia and New Zealand to consult together with Malaysia and Singapore in the event of an attack on or threat to either of the last two countries. New Zealand Infantry battalion (some 500 strong) stationed in Singapore, together with a RNZAF helicopter support unit and other support elements, is one of two main components of the FPDA (the other is the support given by Australia, New Zealand and the UK to the Common Air Defence System of Malaysia and Singapore).

Although Mr Lange says in his letter that New Zealand wishes to remain an active member of the FPDA and does not wish its decision "to upset the atmosphere of confidence about existing security arrangements in the area", it is difficult to see how withdrawal of the battalion - an essential component of the FPDA and the only ground force unit from outside which is stationed in either Malaysia or Singapore - can be squared with that objective. The move will need careful handling. We understand that the Australian Foreign Minister, who was in Wellington recently, made the same point. Mr Hayden added that if New Zealand was not careful the FPDA would fall to bits.

/New Zealand's



New Zealand's Defence policy under the Lange Government has, as you know, been dominated by its anti-nuclear stance and in particular by its declared intention to introduce legislation to prevent nuclear weapons being brought into New Zealand. The Prime Minister is aware of the difficulties this has caused us over the question of ship visits. We do not think, however, it would be appropriate to refer to this in the reply. Nor can we be too critical ourselves of the New Zealand government's decision, given the absence of any permanent military presence of our own in the region.

I am sending copies of this letter to the recipients of yours.

Yours ever,

Colin Budd

(C R Budd)
Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq
No 10 Downing St

DRAFT: minute/letter/teleletter/despatch/note

TYPE: Draft/Final 1+

FROM:

Prime Minister

Reference

To [unclear]

DEPARTMENT:

TEL. NO:

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

- Top Secret
- Secret
- Confidential
- Restricted
- Unclassified

TO:

Mr Lange

Your Reference

Copies to:

JARAKJ

PRIVACY MARKING

.....In Confidence

CAVEAT.....

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/Arrangements,

Enclosures—flag(s).....

NEW ZEALAND Relations Feb 81

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