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CONFIDENTIAL
FFFF CABINET OFFICE PLEASE PASS
DD 052230Z CAOFF
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CONFIDENTIAL
FM FCO
TO DESKBY 052230Z CANBERRA
TELNO 526
OF 051650Z AUGUST 88
INFO DESKBY 060100Z KUALA LUMPUR

FOR PRIME MINISTER'S PARTY ON BOARD VC10.
MEETING WITH DR MAHATHIR: VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE

1. AS YOU WILL SEE FROM OTHER CHANNELS, DR MAHATHIR MAY SEEK THE PRIME MINISTER'S SUPPORT FOR A MINISTERIAL LEVEL CONFERENCE ON VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE EARLY IN THE NEW YEAR. THIS IS A MALAYSIAN PROPOSAL ENDORSED BY ASEAN. UK MINISTERS HAVE NOT CONSIDERED IT, BUT OFFICIALS ARE CAUTIOUS. WE FEAR THAT SUCH A POLITICAL CONFERENCE WOULD BE SIDE-TRACKED INTO OTHER ISSUES AND AWAY FROM THE OVERRIDING NEED FOR VIETNAM TO TAKE BACK HER BOAT PEOPLE. IF DR MAHATHIR MENTIONS IT, THE PRIME MINISTER MAY WISH TO BE NON-COMMITTAL, ASKING DR MAHATHIR HOW HE THINKS SUCH A CONFERENCE WOULD HELP AND STRESSING THAT IT WOULD REQUIRE VERY CAREFUL PREPARATION.
2. IF DR MAHATHIR RAISES THE QUESTION OF VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE IN GENERAL, OUR POLICY IS THAT VIETNAM SHOULD TAKE MEASURES TO STEM THE OUTFLOW AND TAKE BACK ALL WHO ARE NOT GENUINE REFUGEES BUT ECONOMIC MIGRANTS, WHETHER THEY WISH TO RETURN OR NOT, SINCE THERE IS NO FUTURE FOR THEM OUTSIDE VIETNAM.

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 INFO DESKBY 060130Z BANGKOK

FOR PRIME MINISTER'S PARTY ONBOARD VC10.

FOLLOWING FROM PS FOR PRIME MINISTER'S PRIVATE SECRETARY

1. FURTHER TO MY TELNO 525, WE RECOMMEND THAT THE PRIME MINISTER SENDS A FAREWELL MESSAGE TO THAILAND'S FORMER PRIME MINISTER GENERAL PREM, WHO UNEXPECTEDLY TURNED DOWN AN INVITATION TO HEAD THE NEW GOVERNMENT COALITION. PREM IS SURE TO REMAIN AN INFLUENTIAL FIGURE IN THAI POLITICS FOR SOME YEARS TO COME AND WE DO NOT RULE OUT THE POSSIBILITY OF HIS RETURN AS PRIME MINISTER. IF THE CHATICHAI COALITION FALLS APART PREM COULD AGAIN BE INVITED TO FORM A NEW GOVERNMENT.

2. DURING PREM'S EIGHT YEARS AS PRIME MINISTER, THAILAND ENJOYED AN UNPRECEDENTED PERIOD OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND STABILITY. HE HAS TAKEN A FIRM STANCE ON CAMBODIA AND HAS BEEN A KEY CONTRIBUTOR TO ASEAN'S DEVELOPMENT. WE SUGGEST A MESSAGE ALONG THE FOLLOWING LINES: BEGINS

MAY I OFFER YOU A WARM FAREWELL FOLLOWING YOUR DECISION NOT TO CONTINUE AS PRIME MINISTER OF THAILAND AFTER THE GENERAL ELECTION. UNDER YOUR LEADERSHIP THAILAND ENJOYED A PERIOD OF UNPARALLELLED PROSPERITY AND STABILITY. YOUR DISTINGUISHED CAREER AND SERVICE TO YOUR COUNTRY HAVE EARNED YOU WORLDWIDE RESPECT. I SEND YOU MY BEST WISHES FOR THE FUTURE.
 MARGARET THATCHER. ENDS

3. IF YOU AGREE YOU MAY WISH TO AUTHORISE BANGKOK TO ISSUE THIS MESSAGE.

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