



*Meeting*

Prime Minister

Agreed draft messages?

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

*SO file*

*10.7.81*

London SW1A 2AH

10 July 1981

*Dear Michael,*

Prime Minister of Malaysia

Datuk Hussein Onn is stepping down as Prime Minister of Malaysia on health grounds and will be replaced on about 12 July by Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Dr Mahathir Mohamed. Our High Commissioner in Kuala Lumpur considers that messages of farewell to Hussein Onn and of welcome to Mahathir from the Prime Minister would be well received in Malaysia. We agree. I attach a draft telegram.

Dr Mahathir's attitude towards the UK has been ambivalent and he has not shown much warmth for us, although his children are being educated here. He is more forceful and outgoing than Hussein Onn, and, on foreign policy, Malaysia may move towards a more non-aligned stance, although dependence on the West for her economic future will no doubt be recognised by Dr Mahathir. A message should help us to get along side him.

Hussein Onn became Prime Minister in 1976. Under his determined leadership, the threat of internal racial conflict and communist insurgency have much diminished. The economy has prospered and Britain's special relationship with Malaysia has been preserved. He is stepping down because of ill health - you will recall that he came to London twice in the past year for heart surgery.

*yours ever*  
*Rodric Lyne*

(R M J Lyne)  
Private Secretary

M O'D B Alexander Esq  
10 Downing Street  
LONDON  
SW1

OUT TELEGRAM

Classification and Caveats  
**RESTRICTED**

Precedence/Deskby  
**IMMEDIATE**

ZCZC	1	ZCZC
GRS	2	GRS
CLASS	3	RESTRICTED
CAVEATS	4	
DESKBY	5	
FM FCO	6	FM FCO 101900Z JULY 1981
PRE/ADD	7	IMMEDIATE KUALA LUMPUR
TEL NO	8	TELEGRAM NUMBER
	9	MESSAGES TO HUSSEIN ONN AND MAHATHIR
	10	1. Please convey at the appropriate time following messages
	11	from the Prime Minister to
	12	(1) Datuk Hussein Onn
	13	Begins
	14	As you leave office after five distinguished years as Malaysia's
	15	Prime Minister I would like to send you - on my own behalf
	16	and that of the British Government - <u>our very best wishes</u> for
	17	<u>the future</u> . We have greatly enjoyed working with you, and
	18	have particularly appreciated the close and friendly ties which
	19	you have inspired between Britain and Malaysia. I hope that we
	20	shall have the opportunity of seeing you in London.
	21	Margaret Thatcher
///	22	Ends
//	23	(2) Dr Mahathir Mohammed
/	24	Begins
	25	Please accept my congratulations on your assumption of office

NNNN ends telegram	BLANK	Catchword as
File number	Dept S/S office	Distribution
Drafted by (Block capitals) R M J Lyne		
Telephone number 233 4641		
Authorised for despatch		
Comcen reference	Time of despatch	

OUT TELEGRAM (CONT)

Classification and Caveats  
RESTRICTED

IMMEDIATE

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1 <<<<  
2 as Malaysia's Prime Minister. I value the close relations  
3 between our two countries and hope that we may work  
4 together to strengthen these still further.  
5  
6 I look forward to meeting you in Melbourne at the  
7 Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in September.  
8 With best wishes for the future.  
9 Margaret Thatcher  
10 Ends

11  
12 CARRINGTON

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Catchword