

Malaysia

DWF G 209/09

LDX 876
LKN NR 631/9

PP FCO

RR KUALA LUMPUR

GR 470
DEDIP
CONFIDENTIAL
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Mr. Coles (No 10)

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see this.

for Holmes
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FM SINGAPORE 091108Z FEB 82
TO PRIORITY FCO
TELEGRAM NUMBER 36 OF 9 FEBRUARY
INFO KUALA LUMPUR

SECRETARY OF STATE'S VISIT: CALL ON LEE KUAN YEW:

MAHATHIR

FOLLOWING PERSONAL FOR RICHARDS FROM PRIVATE SECRETARY

1. LORD CARRINGTON TPOK ADVANTAGE OF HIS CALL ON LEE KUAN YEW TO DISCUSS WITH HIM OUR DIFFICULTIES WITH MAHATHIR. GRATEFUL IF LEE'S REPLY COULD BE TREATED WITH APPROPRIATE DISCRETION.

2. LEE SAID THAT THE PROBLEM MIGHT PERHAPS HAVE BEEN AVOIDED. (FOR HIS PART, HE HAD ANTICIPATED TROUBLE AND TAKEN ACTION TO GET ON TERMS WITH MAHATHIR BEFORE HE BECAME PRIME MINISTER.) BUT, NOW THAT IT HAD HAPPENED, WE HAD NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO SWEAT IT OUT. WE WOULD HAVE TO RECONCILE OURSELVES TO A LONG HAUL, ENSURE CONSISTENCY IN OUR APPROACH AND MAKE IT CLEAR THAT WE TOOK MAHATHIR SERIOUSLY. THE RAGGED EDGES WOULD EVENTUALLY SMOOTH DOWN.

3. OTHER POINTS MADE BY LEE WERE:

(I) MAHATHIR *

~ * WAS SHREWD ABOUT PEOPLE, DETERMINED AND CONSISTENT. HIS STRENGTH CAME FROM A DEEP SENSE OF MISSION.

(II) THE RESULTS OF HIS POLICIES MIGHT NOT COME UP TO EXPECTATIONS BECAUSE HE WAS DEMANDING TOO MUCH OF THE MALAYS. LEE HOPED THAT HE WOULD HAVE BECOME SOMEWHAT MORE OBJECTIVE BY THE TIME THIS BECAME CLEAR.

(III) THE DIPLOMATIC PRACTICE OF CHANGING HEADS OF MISSION SHORTLY AFTER A CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT WAS ONE WHICH FOREIGN BUSINESSES IN MALAYSIA MIGHT USEFULLY CONSIDER ADOPTING. NEW FACES MIGHT FIND IT EASIER TO ADJUST.

(IV) THERE COULD BE ADVANTAGE IN THE PRIME MINISTER INVITING MAHATHIR TO VISIT LONDON IN DUE COURSE, BUT THIS SHOULD NOT BE DONE IMMEDIATELY AND IT WOULD BE BEST TO WAIT FOR AN OPPORTUNITY SUCH AS A STOPOVER ON THE WAY TO THE UNITED STATES.

(V) WE WERE NOT WITHOUT ADVANTAGES IN MALAYSIA. MUSA WAS TOTALLY DIFFERENT FROM MAHATHIR AND HAD REASON TO BE GRATEFUL TO THE BRITISH. GHAZALI WAS A FRIEND AND SO WAS RAZAK'S SON: THIS WOULD PROVE MORE VALUABLE IN THE LONG-RUN THAN SPECIAL MISSIONS.

(VI) THE QUESTION OF STUDENT FEES HAD MADE IT MORE DIFFICULT FOR US. WE SHOULD ESTABLISH A FUND TO ENABLE US TO LOOK AFTER COUNTRIES THAT WERE "GOING TO MAKE IT"

4. LORD CARRINGTON MENTIONED MAHATHIR'S EMPHASIS ON THE EXAMPLE OF JAPAN AND SOUTH KOREA AND SUGGESTED THAT THERE WAS AN ANTI-WESTERN AS WELL AS A SPECIFICALLY ANTI-BRITISH ELEMENT IN MAHATHIR'S POLICY. LEE WAS INCLINED TO DISMISS THE JAPANESE/SOUTH KOREAN POINT AS A RATIONALISATION.

HENNINGS

~ Passage deleted and closed under

NNNNN

FOI Exemption

Wayland

17 April 2014