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FOR SECRETARY DEFENCE AND FAS(B) FROM DIRECTOR DSB.

SIGINT ON BORNEO.

AS AN INTEGRATED COMMONWEALTH CENTRE, DSB PROVIDES (TO THE
EXTENT PERMITTED BY ITS CAPABILITIES) SIGINT TO MEET AUSTRALIAN,
BRITISH, NEW ZEALAND AND U.S. REQUIREMENTS CONCERNING,
INTER ALIA, :-

(A) [REDACTED] ACTIVITIES IN OR AFFECTING
THE BRITISH TERRITORIES IN BORNEO,

(B) DISSIDENT AND INSURGENT GROUPS IN OR THREATENING THOSE
TERRITORIES.

2. INTERCEPTION OF MATERIAL REQUIRED TO MEET THESE NEEDS IS
CARRIED OUT PRIMARILY AT SINGAPORE, WHERE THE STATION IS MANNED
JOINTLY BY BRITISH CIVILIAN AND AUSTRALIAN SERVICE MEMBERS.
A SMALL BRITISH ARMY STATION IS ALSO OPERATING AT LABUAN.

[REDACTED]

3. THERE IS HOWEVER INCREASING EVIDENCE OF THE SETTING UP WITHIN BORNEO OF LOW LEVEL COMMUNICATIONS CAPABILITIES ASSOCIATED WITH THE TRAINING AND POSSIBLE OPERATIONAL EMPLOYMENT IN THE TERRITORIES OF INDONESIAN AND /OR INDIGENOUS INSURGENT GROUPS. IF THESE COMMUNICATIONS ARE IN FACT IN OPERATIONAL USE, THEY MIGHT WELL PROVIDE TIMELY AND DETAILED SIGINT ON INDONESIAN-SPONSORED OR OTHER INSURGENT FORCES THREATENING OR OPERATING IN THE BRITISH TERRITORIES. THERE IS A STRONG BRITISH REQUIREMENT FOR SUCH INFORMATION.

4. IF SUCH COMMUNICATIONS EXIST, THEY ARE MOST LIKELY TO BE OPERATING IN SOUTHERN BORNEO, AND TO BE INAUDIBLE AT THE EXISTING INTERCEPT STATIONS IN SINGAPORE AND LABUAN. TO ESTABLISH WHETHER THEY DO IN FACT EXIST AND, IF SO, THEIR POTENTIAL AS A SIGINT SOURCE, DSB HAS PROPOSED THAT THE BRITISH AUTHORITIES SET UP A SMALL INTERCEPT PARTY IN KUCHING (JAKSARAWAK), PREFERABLY BY TRANSFERRING FROM THE SINGAPORE STATION BRITISH CIVILIAN OPERATORS WHO ARE ALREADY FAMILIAR WITH THE EXPECTED TECHNICAL FEATURES OF THE TRANSMISSIONS, OR BY TRANSFERRING BRITISH SERVICE SIGINT SPECIALISTS FROM EUROPE. DSB ALSO CONSIDERS THAT THIS PARTY SHOULD INCLUDE AN INDONESIAN LINGUIST WITH SPECIALISED SIGINT EXPERIENCE, TO SEARCH FOR AND SAMPLE POSSIBLE VOICE COMMUNICATIONS, AND THAT THE VOICE RECONNAISSANCE SHOULD BE CARRIED OUT IN BOTH LABUAN AND KUCHING, AND POSSIBLY IN AREAS CLOSER TO THE INDONESIAN BORDER.

5. WHILE CONFIRMING THE IMPORTANCE OF THEIR REQUIREMENT FOR THE SIGINT WHICH MIGHT BE COLLECTED IN THIS WAY, THE BRITISH AUTHORITIES HAVE STATED THAT:-

(A) IT IS NOT PRACTICABLE TO EMPLOY CIVILIAN SIGINT STAFF IN BORNEO=

(B) ADDITIONAL BRITISH SERVICE RESOURCES CAN NOT BE SPARED FROM EUROPE= EVEN IF THEY WERE AVAILABLE, THEY WOULD NOT BE FAMILIAR WITH INDONESIAN TASKS AND WOULD REQUIRE MANY WEEKS OF RETRAINING=

(C) THEY HAVE NO INDONESIAN LINGUIST WITH ANY SIGINT EXPERIENCE.

6. A SUMMARY OF THE REASONS GIVEN BY THE BRITISH AUTHORITIES FOR INABILITY TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL RESOURCES IN BORNEO IS ATTACHED. THEY HAVE ASKED, AS (IN THEIR VIEW), THE ONLY PRACTICABLE ALTERNATIVE, THAT AN AMF PARTY SHOULD BE DETACHED FROM THE SINGAPORE STATION TO BORNEO, AND HAVE POINTED OUT THAT THE AMF IS THE ONLY READILY AVAILABLE SOURCE OF A FULLY TRAINED AND OPERATIONALLY EQUIPPED UNIT OF THE TYPE REQUIRED.

7. THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT, TECHNICALLY, THE AMF IS IN THE BEST POSITION TO PROVIDE THIS PARTY. IN PARTICULAR, IT IS CLEAR THAT THE IMMEDIATE REQUIREMENT FOR A SIGINT-EXPERIENCED INDONESIAN LINGUIST COULD BE MET ONLY FROM AUSTRALIAN RESOURCES. HOWEVER, THERE COULD BE NO ASSURANCE OF CONCEALING FROM PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE THE PRESENCE IN BORNEO OF EVEN A SMALL AMF UNIT OF THE SIZE ENVISAGED (INITIALLY, PERHAPS EIGHT OR TEN MEMBERS). IF AT THIS STAGE, IT SHOULD BE CONSIDERED THAT KNOWLEDGE OF THE MOVEMENT TO OR PRESENCE IN BORNEO OF AN AMF UNIT WOULD HAVE NO SERIOUS POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS, I WOULD SUPPORT THE USE OF AMF (ALTHOUGH THIS WOULD THEN NEED TO BE CONSIDERED ON AN INTER-SERVICE BASIS FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF EFFECT ON OTHER AUSTRALIAN SIGINT REQUIREMENTS).

8. IF HOWEVER THERE SHOULD BE SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL CONSIDERATION, I WOULD RECOMMEND THAT THE BRITISH AUTHORITIES BE INFORMED THAT AN AMF UNIT CAN NOT BE PROVIDED UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES, AND THAT THEY BE INVITED TO RECONSIDER THE PRACTICABILITY OF-

(A) A SHORT-TERM DEPLOYMENT OF CIVILIAN SPECIALISTS TO BORNEO FROM SINGAPORE TO BE REPLACED AS SOON AS POSSIBLY BY

(B) ADDITIONAL BRITISH SERVICE RESOURCES FROM EUROPE.

9. I WOULD SUGGEST ALSO THAT THE BRITISH AUTHORITIES BE INFORMED THAT-

(A) THE AUSTRALIAN AUTHORITIES CONSIDER THAT ANY REQUIREMENT FOR THE COLLECTION AND FIELD PROCESSING OF LOW-LEVEL COMMUNICATIONS IN BORNEO ARISES (AT LEAST AT THIS STAGE) PRIMARILY FROM INTERNAL SECURITY PROBLEMS WITHIN THE BRITISH TERRITORIES, AND IS ESSENTIALLY A MATTER FOR U.K. AUTHORITIES.

(B) THE FULL TECHNICAL SUPPORT OF THE DSB ORGANISATION WILL OF COURSE CONTINUE TO BE PROVIDED, THROUGH EXISTING FACILITIES, TO ASSIST ANY BRITISH FIELD-LEVEL SIGINT ACTIVITIES IN BORNEO.

10. IT IS HOWEVER CLEARLY IMPRACTICABLE FOR THE BRITISH TO PROVIDE, AT SHORT NOTICE, AN INDONESIAN LINGUIST WITH REQUISITE SIGINT EXPERIENCE. I SUGGEST THAT, APART FROM ANY OTHER CONSIDERATIONS, THE NATURE OF OUR SIGINT COLLABORATION WITH THE U.K. IMPLIES AN OBLIGATION TO ASSIST IN A CASE LIKE THIS, IF IT IS CONSIDERED THAT THIS CAN BE DONE WITHOUT OVER-RIDING POLITICAL RISK. A SUITABLE AMF LINGUIST (SERGEANT) COULD BE MADE AVAILABLE FROM THE AMF CONTINGENT IN SINGAPORE, FOR SHORT-TERM DEPLOYMENT TO BORNEO UNDER CONDITIONS WHICH, I CONSIDER, WOULD INVOLVE MINIMAL RISK. BRIEFLY, HE COULD BE ATTACHED FOR ABOUT TWO OR THREE WEEKS TO THE BRITISH ARMY SIGINT UNIT IN LABUAN, AND SHOULD PROBABLY THEN RETURN TO SINGAPORE FOR A SHORT PERIOD BEFORE BEING ATTACHED, AGAIN FOR TWO OR THREE WEEKS, TO ANY PARTY WHICH THE BRITISH AUTHORITIES HAVE MEANTIME ESTABLISHED IN SARAWAK. THE PRACTICABILITY OF PROVIDING THIS ASSISTANCE HAS BEEN DISCUSSED WITH AND AGREED BY DMI, CANBERRA.

11. I FURTHER RECOMMEND, THEREFORE, THAT APPROVAL BE GIVEN FOR ONE AMF LINGUIST TO BE DETACHED FROM SINGAPORE IN ACCORDANCE, GENERALLY, WITH THE ARRANGEMENTS OUTLINED IN PARA 10.

12. CLO PASS COPY TO DMI

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