

Note from the Colonial Office on the use of British forces after Malayan independence (10 January 1956)

Caption: In a note dated 10 January 1956, the Colonial Office provides details about the ongoing talks with the Federation of Malaya on the use of British forces in Malaya after the country's independence. The United Kingdom is keen to maintain military bases in the region.

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LM to 098/4798(MO2)

MA/CIGS ✓
MA/VOIGS
PA/DMO
MO 1
MA/VAG
PA/DSD
PA/DDSD
SD 2
PA/DMT
MT 1 (3)
PA/VQMG
PA/Brig Q (Ops)
Q (Ops) 1,3
PA/DQ
PA/DDQ
Q 6
C 2
I of L
CC 1 & 3 (Overseas)
Asst Sec F 1
Asst Sec WF (A & G)

Separate loose minutes

Use of British forces after Malayan Independence

1. Herewith for information a copy of a note which was handed to the Malayan Chief Minister during the recent talks on "Short term building requirements".
2. The Chief Minister is understood to have agreed to this note although his written assent is still awaited.

Handwritten signature
for Lt Col ES
MO 2
Ext 455
11 Jan 57

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Colonial Office Note on short term building requirements
handed to Chief Minister on 10th January, 1956

The Government of the Federation of Malaya will be aware that until United Kingdom forces can be concentrated in the long-term locations provided under the Defence Agreement, it will be necessary for Her Majesty's Government to construct, on sites now occupied by the United Kingdom Service authorities, a number of temporary camps for these forces. Unless this is done, these forces will possess no accommodation in which they can be stationed as and when they are withdrawn from anti-terrorist operations in the jungle.

2. The Government of the Federation of Malaya have recently informed the United Kingdom Service authorities in the Far East that they can agree in principle that Her Majesty's Government should receive leases on these sites of five years in the first instance, renewable thereafter from year to year at the discretion of the Federation Government.

3. Her Majesty's Government recognise that the Government of the Federation will not wish to commit themselves at this stage to the continued occupation of these sites by U. K. Forces for a definite period of longer than five years, and, for their part, they have no wish to remain in occupation of them any longer than is necessary. They intend to prosecute their long-term military building programme in the Federation with all possible speed, but they can give no assurance that in five years time that programme will have been so far advanced that it will not be necessary to continue occupation of some of these temporary sites.

4. Her Majesty's Government are therefore ready to accept the proposal made by the Government of the Federation, which is set out in paragraph 2 above, but, in so doing, they would wish to be assured that upon the expiry of the initial five year leases they can look to the good offices and co-operation of the Government of the Federation in obtaining any necessary extensions.

5. At the present time, and in order that the temporary building programme may be set in hand at the earliest opportunity, it is necessary for the Service authorities to negotiate leases with the State or Settlement Governments or with private owners. Her Majesty's Government would, however, be most appreciative if the Government of the Federation were able to use their good offices in any individual cases of difficulty which may arise. Her Majesty's Government understand also that the Government of the Federation are intending to secure for themselves power to acquire lands required for defence purposes, and they would wish to enquire of the Government of the Federation whether it is intended that after independence negotiations on these leases or for their extension should be conducted directly with the Government of the Federation or, as at present, with the State or Settlement Governments or private owners.

6. On the particular question of individual sites, agreement has not yet been secured to the United Kingdom's continuing after independence to occupy two sites at Ipoh and one at Wardieburn. The Government of the State of Perak is understood to be anxious to use part at least of the land at Ipoh for the construction of a hospital, while the Government of the State of Selangor wishes to extend mining operations on part of the site at Wardieburn. It is essential if the efficient prosecution of the campaign against the terrorists is not to be impaired and if the re-deployment of U.K. forces in their long-term locations is to be carried out with the greatest expedition that Her Majesty's Government should be permitted to continue in occupation of these sites after independence. If continued occupation of them could be assured for five years, Her Majesty's Government would wish to assure the Government of the Federation that they would be ready within that period to discuss the phased release of all or parts of them to the civil authorities for other purposes, and would also undertake that these sites would be the first to be released as the progress made on the long-term building programme made available new accommodation to which their forces could be moved. If, however, these sites are to be the first which will be evacuated, the surrender of certain of the other sites will as an inevitable consequence be delayed, and Her Majesty's Government therefore trust that the Government of the Federation will be able to give them the assurance for which they ask in paragraph 4 above.

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7. The Government of the Federation will be aware that detachments of Australian troops are stationed at Ipoh. Her Majesty's Government cannot at the stage commit the Australian Government, but they will do all they can to carry that Government with them.

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