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Foreign & Commonwealth Office

**"Written Ministerial Statement"**

31st January 2006

**Pingat Jasa Malaysia**

**The Minister for Trade, Investment and Foreign Affairs (Mr Ian Pearson):** The Pingat Jasa Malaysia (PJM) is a commemorative medal which the Government of Malaysia would like to award to eligible British citizens, for their service in Malaya or Malaysia between 31 August 1957 and 12 August 1966.

The Committee on the Grant of Honours, Decorations and Medals (the official committee which advises Her Majesty The Queen on matters of honours policy) has recommended that an exception to two of the long-established Rules governing the accepting and wearing of foreign (including Commonwealth) awards to be made, to enable the Malaysian Government to present the PJM. Her Majesty The Queen has been graciously pleased to approve this recommendation.

This exception to the Rules means that all the many thousands of eligible former members of the Armed Forces/Veterans, and others, may receive the PJM. This will be in addition to the British General Service Medal (with appropriate Malaya/Borneo clasp) that many veterans will have been eligible to receive for their service in Malaya/Borneo.

Permission to wear the PJM will not, however, formally be given. It is long standing Government policy that non-British medals will not be approved for events or service:

- that took place more than 5 years before initial consideration, or in connection with events that took place in the distant past (e.g. commemorative medals);
- if the recipient has received a British award for the same service.

However, Her Majesty's Government welcomes, and believes it is important to recognise, the generous gesture by the King and Government of Malaysia, and their wish to acknowledge the service given by veterans and others in the years immediately after Malaysian independence. The exception recommended reflects this and our strong and important relationship with Malaysia.

The Committee on the Grant of Honours, Decorations and Medals reviewed the 5-year and double medalling rules, and considered that, while there were sound reasons why they should be retained, there will be occasions when specific circumstances require exceptions to the rules to be recommended. When such exceptions are contemplated, the Committee will consider each request on a case by case basis, taking into account any special circumstances at the time. The fact that a similar request has been approved in the past will not mean that permission will be granted in future cases.

Applications for the PJM, and its subsequent distribution will essentially be a matter for the Malaysian authorities, in collaboration with the relevant British Government Departments. Large numbers may be involved. It will take some time for the applications to be processed and for the medal to be distributed. The Malaysian High Commission and the relevant British Government agencies will work together to determine eligible applicants. Veterans' organisations and Service and Regimental Associations will also be involved."