



STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER, THE
RT. HON. HAROLD HOLT, CH, MP, IN THE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

26TH SEPTEMBER, 1967

VISIT TO AUSTRALIA BY THE PRIME MINISTER
OF NEW ZEALAND

I ask leave of the House to make a short statement concerning discussions between the Australian and New Zealand Governments.

I inform the House, with pleasure, that arrangements have been completed for a brief visit to Canberra next week - at my invitation - by the Right Honourable the Prime Minister of New Zealand, Mr Holyoake. (The New Zealand Minister for Defence, Mr Thompson, will accompany Mr Holyoake).

Australia and New Zealand have a great many problems of common interest and talks between Mr Holyoake and myself between New Zealand Ministers and Australian Ministers and between officials of our respective Governments take place from time to time. It might be said that we are in almost constant touch. But a visit by the New Zealand Prime Minister to Australia, however, is an event of significance out of the ordinary run of discussions and we welcome it wholeheartedly.

The visit will be the occasion to discuss a number of matters but consultation on defence policies in relation to South East Asia will be a particular purpose.

The visit will be timely in that it will provide the first opportunity that Mr Holyoake and I have had to discuss at first hand the British Government's Defence White Paper of July, with its profound implications for British Forces in Malaysia/Singapore.

Both Australia and New Zealand have troops in the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve in Malaysia/Singapore and since the British decisions, Australia and New Zealand are both in a new situation in which foreign policy as well as defence policy aspects come up for review. As I have already indicated to the House, I contemplate discussions with a number of Governments before completing our re-examination of Australian defence policy. It will be clear to the House that a major first step in this reappraisal at Government level is talks with New Zealand.

Both Australia and New Zealand have forces engaged and working together in Vietnam also. By means of exchanges at diplomatic and defence level there is at any stage a close understanding between the two Governments about Vietnam but it will be extremely useful for us to review together the situation there.

Perhaps I should add as a further word of explanation that I do not expect to be making any early Government announcements as a direct

result of these discussions. The talks with Mr Holyoake (and Mr Thompson) will be, as I have said, part of our continuing close consultation and we are neither at the start nor at the end of this process.

I expect Mr Holyoake to arrive in Canberra on Monday, 2nd October. Most of Tuesday will no doubt be taken up with discussions. The discussions will be with myself, senior colleagues and members of the Cabinet Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence.

The Minister for External Affairs, Mr Hasluck, has deferred his departure for the United Nations General Assembly at New York in order to be present for Mr Holyoake's visit. Mr Holyoake will return to Wellington on Wednesday, 4th October.

My colleagues and I are looking forward to seeing Mr Holyoake and Mr Thompson in Canberra. They will receive a warm welcome from us.
