

RENAMING OF U. S. NAVAL COMMUNICATION

AT NORTH-WEST CAPE, W. A.

20 SEPTEMBER 1968



Speech by the Prime Minister, Mr John Gorton

I must begin, your Excellency, by thanking the President of the United States, through you, for the message, which through you, he delivered to us today. It is a unique thing for a United States Naval Communication station of this kind to be named after the national of another country. But I think for a number of reasons, it is entirely fitting that in this case it should be so.

For one thing, it is fitting because I do not think that there was any Australian statesman or any statesman from any other nation who established such warm, close, personal relations with a President of the United States as were established by Harold Holt. And this is a matter which goes beyond a mere personal satisfaction in such relations and extends into national benefits that flow from them.

It is fitting too because this station, as part of a giant network keeping watch and ward on all the oceans of the world, is a station which will enhance the military capacity, not only of the United States but also of our own nation, Australia.

Military capacity can be used in many ways. It can be used to subjugate peoples and overthrow freedom as we saw it used by Hitler and Mussolini. It can be used to stifle freedom of expression as we recently saw it used in Czechoslovakia. It can be used for invasion and aggression as we saw it used in Korea, and as we are seeing it used by North Viet Nam in South Viet Nam.

But military capacity can be used in other ways. It can be used as a shield for freedom. It can be used as a method of deterring aggression, of maintaining freedom, of succouring the weak. And the United States and Australia has used, and in my belief will always use, its military capacity merely for the latter purposes. So it is fitting again that these purposes should be served by a station named after a man who had these ideals as those he would wish to see all over the world.

Finally, Sir, it is also fitting that this should be a Naval Communication Station because the late Prime Minister was a man who loved the sea and who was happiest when close to the sea.

We feel honour, Sir, at what you have done. We feel confidence in what this station will help our countries to shield, and we remember that a year ago the man after whom this station was named, stood here and opened the complex.

I hope you will convey to your President the gratitude of the people of Australia that this gesture has been made, and the resolution of the people of Australia that in co-operation with the United States, we shall seek to secure that peace with freedom of which, Sir, you have spoken.

I thank you.

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