



# PRIME MINISTER

Press Statement No. 207

21 March 1974

## AMENDMENT OF THE NORTH WEST CAPE AGREEMENT

The Prime Minister, Mr. Whitlam, as Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs, and the United States Ambassador, Mr. Marshall Green, today signed and exchanged Notes relating to amendments to the 1963 Agreement on the North West Cape Naval Communication Station. The exchange of Notes represents the first step by the Australian and United States Governments in giving effect to the arrangements reached as a result of the negotiations conducted by the Minister for Defence, Mr. Barnard, with the United States Government in Washington in January.

Three amendments are contained in the Notes. The first provides for the Station to be operated as a joint facility by the armed forces of the two Governments. The second will have the effect of reducing exclusive land rights at North West Cape; the United States would retain exclusive rights to a communications building only. The third limits the Australian Government's financial responsibility for its participation in the joint facility.

The Prime Minister said the Government proposed, following consideration by the Cabinet, to introduce the necessary amending legislation to the United States Naval Communications Station Agreement Act (1963). It was intended that this be done, if practicable, during the current sittings of the Parliament. The amended Agreement would come into force after legislation had been enacted and instruments notifying the approval of the two Governments exchanged.

CANBERRA. A.C.T.