



FOR THE PRESS

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WEST NEW GUINEA

Statement by the Prime Minister, Right Honorable R.G. Menzies

Cabinet has given consideration to recent developments in West New Guinea. We have in particular been concerned at the latest news of the dropping of Indonesian troops in and around Merauke.

With every natural desire to live on terms of friendliness with Indonesia, we find it necessary to point out two things.

One is that this warlike action is quite inconsistent with the statements publicly and repeatedly made to us, that Indonesia would not pursue its territorial claim to West New Guinea by force of arms.

The other is that the negotiations recently begun in the presence of Mr. Bunker after initiating action by the acting Secretary-General of the United Nations, have yet to be resumed and concluded. We find it impossible to understand why the processes of peaceful negotiation should be interrupted and impaired by military aggression.

We would like to say, once more, that we desire and will respect peaceful settlement arising from such negotiation; that active hostilities can achieve nothing but unnecessary bitterness; and that peace in this part of the world is important, not only to the nations immediately concerned but to the whole future of South East Asia and the South West Pacific.

It is also important for the future authority of the United Nations that international territorial differences should be settled without either the threat or the use of armed force.