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INDEPENDENCE OF SOUTH VIET NAM

Statement by the Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. Sir Robert Menzies

The Australian Government was informed by the United States Government of the further decisions now announced in Washington by the President for the defence of South Viet Nam. The Government has in fact been in continuing touch with Washington about the course of United States policy, and I have already conveyed to President Johnson our support for these further efforts by the United States to preserve the independence of South Viet Nam. I have also assured him of Australia's continuing assistance in the defence of South Viet Nam.

The armed forces of South Viet Nam, the population centres in the rural areas and the country's installations and transport and communications systems are currently under heavy military pressure and attack from the Viet Cong. At the same time, the Viet Cong, in pursuing their campaign of insurgency and guerrilla warfare, are strengthened and supported by the supply of men and equipment from North Viet Nam on a substantial scale. The South Vietnamese Armed Forces are maintaining their courageous efforts to counter these tactics but it is clear that additional assistance from outside is necessary.

We support also the steady purpose of the United States to pursue every political and diplomatic effort to open the way for international discussion. We earnestly hope that these further evidences of United States' resolve will help convince those now seeking to overthrow by force the Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam that they cannot succeed and that there will be an end to the senseless violence and bloodshed opening the way for a peaceful solution in Viet Nam.

MELBOURNE,
29th July, 1965.