

FOR PRESS

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MINISTER TO VISIT SOUTH-EAST ASIA

Statement by the Prime Minister, Mr. Harold Holt.

The Minister for the Army, Mr. Malcolm Fraser, leaves for a comprehensive three-week visit to South-East Asia on Sunday, June 19.

Accompanied by the Secretary, Department of the Army, Mr. Bruce White, the Minister will be making his first visit to troops serving in various overseas locations.

The Prime Minister, Mr. Harold Holt, said today that the prime purpose of Mr. Fraser's mission was to visit the 1st Australian Task Force at its operational base in Viet Nam.

While in Viet Nam, Mr. Fraser would also inspect civil aid projects completed by Australian troops and discuss proposed schemes designed to assist the civilian Vietnamese population.

Mr. Fraser would visit Manila, Bangkok and Vientiane before arriving in Saigon on June 25. He would spend six days in Viet Nam. During this period, he would have discussions at U.S. and Australian Military Headquarters, visit units of the Australian Task Force, advisers of the Australian Army Training Team and the 1st Australian Logistic Support Group and U.S. Logistic Command at Vung Tau.

On June 30, Mr. Fraser arrives in Singapore to hold discussions with senior military officers, including the Commander, Australian Army Force, Far East Land Forces, Brigadier F.R. Evans. He would later spend six days on the Malay Peninsula and in Sabah and Sarawak.

The Minister would also visit the 28th Commonwealth Infantry Brigade Group at Terendak Cantonment, Malacca, which included Australian Army artillery, engineer, infantry and Service Corps elements. In Sabah, he would visit the 22nd Construction Squadron Group, Royal Australian Engineers, which was engaged on a road-building project as part of the Australian Government Aid Programme to Malaysia.

In Sarawak, Mr. Fraser would visit the 4th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, in the Bau District. He was scheduled to leave Singapore for Australia at the end of his tour on July 9.

During Mr. Fraser's absence, the Minister for Health, Dr. A.J. Forbes, would undertake the additional duties of Minister for the Army.

Canberra,
17 June, 1966.