



EXTRACT FROM PRIME MINISTER'S LUNCH-TIME
STREET MEETING AT GLADSTONE, (QLD.)

21st September, 1967

Now before I conclude, I will turn quite briefly to those other aspects I mentioned, because while we do concentrate our attention upon our own forward progress, at the same time, we cannot ignore the hazards that we face as a nation or the state of the world around us.

That is why the central issue in the last general election campaign was the issue of the security of the nation and our attitudes towards our participation in Vietnam and towards the alliance we have with the United States of America.

No matter in my lifetime has meant more to the future security of Australia than the negotiation of the ANZUS treaty. That treaty between Australia, New Zealand and the United States, under which the security of the other was virtually guaranteed if we came under attack at any time - nothing means more to us today for our security in a country of this size with so few people than the knowledge that should we be threatened at any time, the mightiest power in the world is there to come to our defence. I am glad to say that I found no wavering at any time in the attitude of the public men of the United States, successive Presidents, their spokesmen, and others. Only in the last few days, Admiral Johnson, Chief of the United States Pacific Fleet, who came out for the opening of the North-West Cape Communications Station where I performed the official ceremony last Saturday morning, reiterated their determination to remain in this area of the world to contribute to security.

Now our involvement in Vietnam is wrapped up in this as it is in other things. In the first place, we don't believe in small countries being attacked by more powerful countries or more powerful influences. We have gone to war twice in two world wars to resist aggression against small powers. Secondly, we believe that if Vietnam were to go under, then the security of the whole of South-East Asia would come under threat, and finally the security of Australia itself. Thirdly, as I have just pointed out to you, we believe that unless we are willing to join with our allies in the time of need of others, then we can place little reliance on them coming to our aid should we ever be in that state of need.

It is not so long ago that we were troubled by what was going on in Indonesia. There are 100 million people there and they were pursuing a policy of confrontation against Malaysia and Singapore. Well, matters have quietened down there, and I hope we shall always be able to live in peace and co-operation with the people of Indonesia.

But we cannot take any of these things for granted. And as we build up our own defences, and we have more than doubled expenditure on them in the last four years.....as we build up the strength of our services and they have never been at a higher level of efficiency nor strength at any period in which we have not been involved in total war.....as we do these things, so also must we keep our alliance strong.

Now, does anybody in their senses imagine that you can keep that alliance strong if the policy of the Labor Party on this matter were ever to be given effect? And the present policy - and in substance it is the same as the policy that the Australian people rejected in the last election - the present policy is that unless the Americans accept conditions which the Labor Party must know to be unacceptable to them, then we will be pulling our troops out of Vietnam. We will be deserting - as was the policy put forward by Mr Calwell at the last election - we will be deserting our allies in a time of military operation. Well, I know the Australian people would never agree to that. They did not agree to it last November and I don't believe you are going to agree to that in the vote that you cast this time.
