

HIGGINS BY-ELECTION CAMPAIGN

OPENING SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER, MR.

JOHN GORTON

Caulfield Town Hall, Melbourne

13TH FEBRUARY, 1968



Mr Chairman, Mr Premier, Mr Anthony, Mr McMahon, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I come before you tonight as a candidate for the seat of Higgins, seeking the endorsement of the electors of Higgins, and asking them to place me in that situation which was previously held by a great Australian who led this country for two years. This is, in essence, a by-election, a request to the electors of Higgins in particular that they should think me worthy, as I hope they will, to fill that place so tragically vacated by Mr Holt. I would try and fill it as well as he did.

I must say to the electors of Higgins tonight, and to those people in Australia who may be outside this hall or outside the electorate tonight, the attitudes which I would adopt, the approaches which my Government would adopt, towards the future progress of this, our joint country. But there is something I must say to you at once, and that is that this is not tonight, this speech, and I think it ought not to be, a policy speech in the sense that policy speeches are made at general elections. This is no time at a by-election, being held two-thirds of a way through a financial year for which a government has budgeted, for which it has struck a rate of taxation, for which it has assessed expenditure and income, to launch out into new promises involving new expenditure, and either new rates of taxation or increases in deficit.

Indeed, I think that a mini-policy at this time could well be held to be irresponsible. Rather, I think, is this a time to express to the electorate and to Australia, our approaches to the needs of Australia, the goals which we will set ourselves to try and attain as and when we can, the course on which we will seek to steer our country towards the future years of greatness which lie in store for us.

And so I shall talk to you tonight of the settled policies which we have adopted and will continue to adopt on defence, on foreign affairs, on relations with our neighbours, for on these things, indeed, may depend in the ultimate our capacity eventually, acting as a free people, to work out our own destiny and to decide what our domestic progress will indeed be.

Having spoken of these things, this touchstone which may decide the future of Australia as an independent nation, then I shall seek to put before you certain domestic matters, and the approaches and the emphasis which we would put on these domestic matters.

First let me talk to you on the question of Defence. I have said that on our efforts here may well depend our capacity in future years to decide our own destiny and to run our own affairs. This calls now, in the state of the world as it is at present, for a significant and an onerous effort from the Australian people, and an effort which all of us would wish, were circumstances different, could be put - not into an insurance policy but into the kind of development for which our effort in defence could do so much.

However great the effort we make in defence - and it is becoming great - in no future that I can foresee can we in Australia rely on ourselves alone, or remain secure without alliance with some friendly and significantly powerful ally, having the same approach to life as we Australians have... (Interjection - "The same old line") and a true old line and a line on which Australia has depended for more than a century and a half, from the United Kingdom.

For us, though we can look to, and though I am sure we would in a crisis be given military assistance in time of need by the United Kingdom, who for over a century and a half has been our shield and our buckler, and to whom, if blood be the price of protection, Lord God, we have paid in full, but who has for that period of time protected us, and to whom we could still look for protection, yet the changing years have ordained that in the ultimate, the security of this small nation now depends on its alliance with the United States, and on protection from the United States. No small nation such as ours can, in the world as it is today, I suggest to you, live with happiness and security and safety without protection of that kind.

This is a fact which places on us, as I believe, a duty of being an ally, when we think the United States is right, in the fullest sense of the word, of being prepared to contribute, as we have been prepared to contribute in the past, and not merely to receive and give nothing in return. That, as a basis for a defence policy for Australia is, I believe, essential for our future security. That is why the expenditure on defence in this country has risen until it is this year \$1,118 million, and with commitments we have already entered into and which will flow from the commitments we have already entered into, will in the two years ahead increase above that figure. It is not a sum which alone can afford us security but it is the smallest sum which, I suggest to you, we can with honour expend, and as a result of it, expect that protection which may be necessary for our future progress.

(Interjection - "Not for my son, Clive")

Well, I don't know where your son, Clive, is sir, but there are a number of other sons of a number of other Australians in the past, now and in the future who no doubt would be prepared to back what I have said for the sake of their country.

That, Mr Chairman, leads me to a discussion on the position which past governments have taken up and which this government will sustain on the matter of our involvement in Viet Nam. I believe our policy in Viet Nam, the policy of the Government, ought to be stated, or rather, re-stated clearly, and I shall try to do this.

Firstly, we believe that the United States was right, under President Kennedy in the later half of 1961, to accede to the South Vietnamese request for military assistance to counter a military incursion from the North. And we believe the United States is right, under President Johnson, to have continued and to continue the course first mapped by President Kennedy in this matter.

We believe that when the original decision was made armed attacks were being made on South Viet Nam, and that those attacks were instigated, controlled, supplied and maintained by the North Vietnamese

which provided regular troops to assist and command the insurgents. We believe that in spite of the terrorist activity carried on since that time, local support has so fallen off in South Viet Nam that more and more North Vietnamese regular armed troops have been deployed in the South, and that the fighting has assumed the character of an invasion of South Viet Nam by the Government of North Viet Nam, just as there was previously an invasion of South Korea by the Government of North Korea.

It is true ~~this~~ is aggression by a communist government seeking to impose its rule by force, but the prime reason for preventing it succeeding is not because of its source, not because it stems, as it happens to in this case, from a communist country, but because it is aggression. That is the reason for opposing it.

For I believe, and I suggest to all you Australians that what best promotes our national security and the national security of other small States, what best guarantees our national survival, along with the survival of other small powers as truly independent nations, is that we should have a world in which aggression by one nation or part of one nation against another is shown to be unsuccessful and does not succeed in whole or in part.

For if it is seen to succeed, then it is likely as our history has shown - - as the history ~~in the lifetime~~ of many people in this hall has shown - if it is seen to be successful, then it is likely to be repeated and repeated and repeated until eventually it must be stopped at a cost greater in destruction, in pain and in loss of life than would have been required had it been stopped at its inception.

That is why Australians fought against the aggressions of Hitler which succeeded one another until they had to be stopped... (Cheers) Sir, if you are prepared to cheer Hitler, I am not, any more than I am prepared to cheer a communist dictator or any other governing power which seeks to impose its wish by force upon some other independent nation.

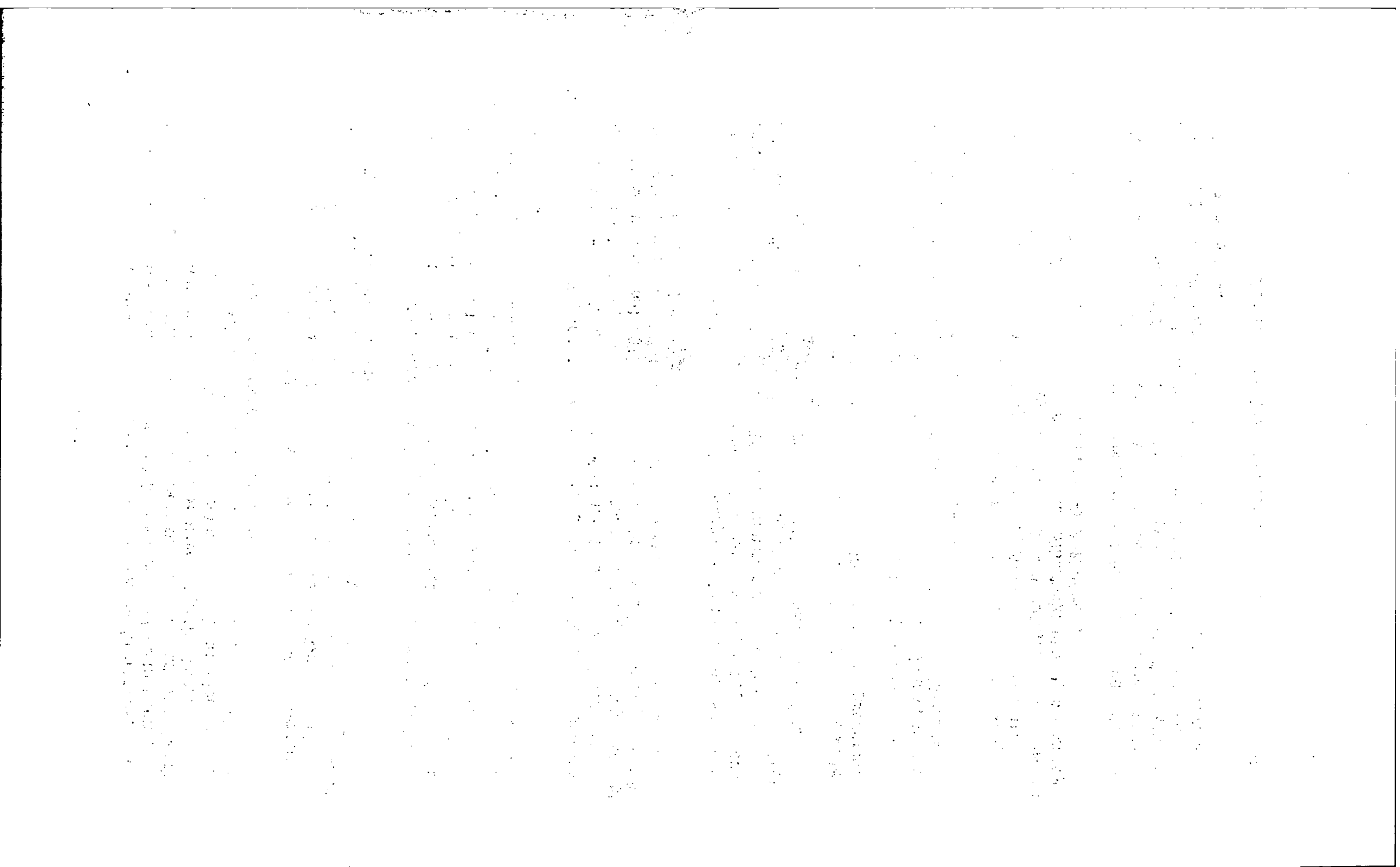
That is why Australians fought with the United Nations in Korea against an attack on South Korea by North Korean naked aggression.

That is why Australians opposed the militant expression of confrontation between Indonesia and Malaysia, opposed it in conjunction with the United Kingdom. And that is why we are right, as I believe, to help our ally, the United States, in South Viet Nam.

We shall continue to take the action we are now taking for as long it is necessary to help attain the objective of preventing the success of North Vietnamese aggression. At the same time, we have always realised that the military effort in Viet Nam, although absolutely necessary, is only one of the components required in this kind of war.

The other component is the raising of standards of everyday living in the areas where military forces provide a shield for the civilian population a shield which can, of course, be pierced but which can prevent the destruction of what is sought to be done to raise living standards. Let me, ladies and gentlemen, at this time, put to you an illustration of what I mean by that.

At one stage, I was in charge of running the Colombo Plan



for Australia, and in an attempt to help the people of South Viet Nam, quite some years ago, we sought to take over - we did take over - a tract of land of a kind which was not being used in that country because it was thought that it could be in no way productive. By the introduction of special kinds of legumes, of a manurial programme, we were able on that land to grow and to show surrounding farmers there could be grown pastures on which cattle could be grazed, and were able to set up a dairy farm at Ben Cat which provided for the first time in history for the children of Saigon, pasteurised milk grown in that experimental farm and sent to the city.

This was an illustration to the people of that region of what could be done. You can, from your own minds, imagine what would have happened there to increase living standards had this been permitted to succeed, but it was not permitted to succeed. It was not permitted to succeed because that farm was attacked, those cattle were slaughtered by the Viet Cong regulars who did not wish living standards to be increased, because if they were so increased, then it would show that we were able to provide a better standard of life than they themselves could do.

This is why there is a need for this protection of this civil action. And that is why from the very beginning, our army in Viet Nam has been provided with money to carry out its own civil aid programme in the villages, to help with the medical treatment of the villagers, to help in the small matters which mean so much to them - the construction of a school, house, the construction of a small culvert, the construction of a small infirmary and the provision of village industries. These are the things which go hand in hand with what we are trying to do, and the things which must.... does anybody disagree? Is there some murmur of disagreement? Are you suggesting that these things must not be done, that we must not seek to build up the living standards of the villagers and the townsfolk? Because if you do suggest that, then I can understand why you would oppose the policy which we adopt. But if you don't, if you believe these should be built up and should be shielded while they are being built up, then you must support what we have done.

To sum up our policy, Mr Chairman: We believe it right.... (interjections) Oh, yes, I think these policies should be summed up, don't you? There has been a marked reluctance to sum them up in some quarters on this matter.

We believe it right to maintain the elementary right of the South Vietnamese people to determine their own future, as they showed in recent elections they were capable of doing. We will continue to provide, as we are providing, significant and effective military assistance to the allied effort to achieve this aim, and we will provide it for as long as we are called upon to help achieve this aim.

We will support, as we have supported, the many efforts by the United States and the United Nations for discussions seeking a negotiated end to the war and a settlement which provides the South Vietnamese with a just and an enduring peace under which they can determine their own future. The United States has amply demonstrated its desire for such discussions, the United Nations has sought to help the United States to obtain such discussions, but so far every such proposal has been rejected, whether it came from the United Nations or the United States, by the North Vietnamese.

But, Mr President, there is one thing we will not do. We will

not urge on the United States that there should be discussions designed solely to negotiate methods of surrendering the South Vietnamese to the rule of the North, which is a course which sometimes seems to be suggested in this country. Nor will we urge on them that bombing designed to impede the flow of men and materials to the South, as distinct from bombing on a civilian population - men and materials travelling down to kill Australian and American troops - should be stopped as a condition imposed by the Viet Cong for possible talks with no compensating conditions as to holding up the sending of such men and material.

We will, insofar as we can, continue to seek to improve the economic lot and the living conditions of the villagers in the area in which our troops operate, for we consider this to be a vital and necessary task and one which must, as soon as possible, be tackled throughout the whole of South Viet Nam. We will do it by continuing and expanding what we are already doing. . . . (Interjection) If you hadn't interjected you would have heard. I will repeat it: By providing to the villagers the simple medical treatment there required, by building school houses in the villages, by fostering co-operatives in the villages and providing fertilisers so that their crops can better be grown, by providing wells for pure water. Not by vast over-riding/monetary bank approaches, but by getting down to the grass roots, as we have been getting down to the grass roots in our area. That, sir, is how we will do it, and that, sir, is something I believe the people of South Viet Nam understand and will appreciate, now want, and will want in the future.

I was seeking to spell out, before I was diverted, a policy which we are going to implement, and I have sought to spell it out in simple words, and words which can be understood by all, as I hope they will have been. But this thing that I am discussing is one of moment to the present and to the future of Australia, one of moment to the association between this nation and the United States, and therefore it is a matter of great public concern. That is why I have sought so carefully to try to put before you, whether you agree with it or not, what we are doing and what we will continue to do. I believe that on matters of this moment clear statements of policy ought to be made.

But I do suggest this. Australians are denied or have so far been denied any clear statement of policy on this matter by the Opposition. It is true that last year the Federal Labor Conference, by resolution (Interjection) adopted a policy - which you clap - which requires that the United States should cease bombing North Viet Nam unconditionally (Cheers) Fine, fine, you express your opinion. This is what the Federal Labor Conference adopted, and no doubt those who applauded agree with it, as is your right. They adopted a policy that the United States should recognise the National Liberation Front - the Viet Cong - as a principal party to negotiations (boos). . . . I don't know who you are booing, but I take it you are booing the Viet Cong. They adopted a policy that the United States should transform operations in South Viet Nam into holding operations, which means staying where you are and repelling attacks and allowing attacks to be concentrated and mounted against you and just pushing them back but not doing anything to prevent them from materialising, or to move out into country surrounded by the enemy.

Now that is the policy that was adopted, I agree, by the Federal Labor Conference. A further policy adopted was that if the United States did not accept this ultimatum on all these three points, then the

Australian Government must withdraw its armed forces (Interjections) which, of course - and those of you who clap, if you are intellectually honest must admit this - means abandoning the expression of the United States/Australian alliance in Viet Nam.

Now these were resolutions adopted at the 1967 Conference of the Australian Labor Party, and the Rules and Standing Orders of that party state :

"The Federal Conference shall be the supreme governing authority of the party...."(Interjector - "Hear, hear")

Well I think there is at least one man in Australia who disagrees with you, if I heard him properly on TV....

"...and its decision shall be binding upon every member and every section of the party."

So it would seem, would it not, that this policy of presenting an ultimatum and withdrawing all Australian troops, if it is not accepted, is the policy of the Opposition, one would think.

But the present Leader of the Opposition refuses either to confirm or to deny that this is the policy by which he is bound and which he and his supporters are bound to carry out, and indeed, has indicated that no matter what the Federal Conference says, he is supreme and not bound by it.

I don't know whether that is true or not, but the people of Australia ought to be told whether it is true or not, because I think it fair to say that there is an attempt here to blur the issue, to slither away from questions and to be evasive. And further, I think it fair to say..... (Interjector : "Where is your policy?") Where's my policy? I stated it in explicit terms - we are continuing to do what we have decided to do because we think it right. Now that is clear, explicit and cannot be misunderstood. I think it fair to say that if the Leader of the Opposition is bound by the official policy, as I believe he is, then carrying out that policy would severely damage our relations with the United States and would weaken, if not destroy, that Australian/United States alliance on which our future security could so much depend, and which the Opposition policy says is so important that they are going to withdraw Australian troops unless the United States accepts an ultimatum in order to maintain the alliance they regard as so important.

There is, therefore, I do believe, in the interests of properly-informed democratic debate, an obligation on the Leader of the Opposition clearly to state whether he is bound to adhere to official Labor policy, and whether he will do so, and if not, how he can avoid doing so, assuming he wishes not to do so. And that ought to be a question which could be answered in as simple terms as I have spelt out our policy tonight, and is a question to which the Australian people have a right to an answer, when forming a judgment, even in Higgins where there is an opponent adopting some sort of policy - I don't know what - against the Government. They ought to know precisely what that policy is if they are to form a considered judgment in the way a democracy should do so.

Mr President, moving on from that particular matter, I come to another area which is of great importance to this nation and to the future

of this nation, and that is the effect of what is happening now, or what will happen in the future, in Malaysia, in Singapore, countries so close to us; indeed, the closest countries to our shores, I think, except that of our closest neighbour, Indonesia.

In this field, there are questions of maintaining a military presence in Malaysia and Singapore, and of assistance in raising the economic activity and helping the economic progress of that region. Why? Because we hope that by assisting the economic progress of that region we will see, and we must see if this assistance is to be fully effective, that that assistance leads to an increase in the standards of living of the people in the villages, the hamlets and the towns of those countries. That is the end result that we are seeking.

On the military side, Great Britain has for long maintained in Malaysia and Singapore naval, air and ground forces and the bases from which they can operate, and has maintained them as a stabilising force in that area. They have been intended to prevent, and they have prevented with Australian forces participating, local armed insurgency and attacks by one country in the region on any other. And so they were instrumental in preventing the communist insurgency in Malaysia when it took place, supported at the time by many of the people who now support the same sort of insurgency elsewhere, and the Australians helped in that. They were able, if not to stop it, to discourage it to the extent that it ceased, the armed expression of confrontation of Indonesia against Malaysia.

Now for some time, it has been planned that these forces should be run down, and should be withdrawn at the end of 1975, and we in Australia knew that and planned on that. At that time, it was envisaged when these plans were made, that British ground troops would have left the region by the end of 1975 but that there would be still, instantly available and earmarked for the purpose, a British Air and Naval capability able swiftly to return and to bring back ground troops should a situation require it.

But more recently, on what I understand are economic ground, it has been decided that the withdrawal of British Forces will be completed - not by the end of 1975 but by the end of 1971, some four years earlier. At the same time as this decision was made known, the swift availability of that naval and air capability which was previously planned is clouded by doubt, and we do not know what its composition will be, what its capacity to fill the role previously planned for it will be, what time will be necessary for it to be available, and whether it would indeed be available on the decision of the United Kingdom alone.

This has put into this situation entirely new matters for discussion which were unknown to us until the recent visit of the British Cabinet Minister.

There has therefore been not merely a quite considerable alteration of the date by which withdrawal is to be completed but also what appears to be a significant difference in planning for the situation which will obtain after withdrawal.

It is clear to everyone, of course, that Australia and New Zealand cannot step in and fill the role which Britain has vacated. But the Prime Minister of Singapore and the Prime Minister of Malaysia have both indicated a strong desire that there should be some continuing Australian military presence in the area after 1971. They wish this, they have asked

for this. They see it as a contribution to stability in their region, and their wishes must, of course, have great weight with us.

For these reasons, the Minister for External Affairs has recently been on an exploratory mission to Singapore and Malaysia to discuss in more detail what those countries are able to do to help themselves, what contribution they see Australia making, what role they see for a contribution Australia might make, and matters of that kind. This will be followed by further technical military discussions and Five Power discussions at a time to be arranged.

Many of the military factors in this matter are as yet unknown. They are not known clearly enough for final decisions to be taken now, but it is clear that the rulers of Malaya and Singapore have indicated that they wish a continuing Australian presence after 1971, and it is the feeling of my Government that these wishes having been so expressed, we should seek as far as possible, according to our own resources, to fall in with them.

We have, of course, provided other aid to these countries. We have provided already, and earmarked funds already, to provide \$45 million in aid to Malaysia and to Singapore to enable them to help defend themselves. But still the matter does remain that it will be there a different situation than that which existed before, that in that situation we are asked by our neighbours to contribute, and that we must pay attention to the wishes which our neighbours so put forward.

But it must be made clear, and it has been made clear, that any Australian military presence in these countries is not in any way directed against Indonesia, that other great country in our immediate region and our nearest neighbour. Indeed what we would like to see and what we would seek to bring about, insofar as in our power lies, is a closer and closer association of Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Australia and New Zealand - not necessarily militarily, but in the fields of economic co-operation, technical assistance and common action on regional grounds. This is an objective we should like to see attained and which we shall do all in our power to see attained. (Sustained applause)

These are two of the important matters facing this nation in the years ahead, but of course, again outside our borders before I turn to problems inside it, are matters not military but matters of helping insofar as our resources and requirements permit, the world community, and particularly that part of that community which is in our region and closest to us. That is the provision of economic assistance, of technological training, of what we can do to help to build the economies of those countries outside of this.

We will this year, as Australians, contribute in foreign aid, including aid to New Guinea, something like \$148 million or about \$12 per head for each Australian. (Interjection) Well if you don't think it is enough, give me another dollar and I will see it goes there.

In the field of helping to develop the trade - trade as distinct from aid - of less developed countries, a field which in the long run can be of more significance and more assistance than mere aid - we have as a country, taken initiatives through the Department of Trade, and through Mr McEwen, which have been acknowledged and appreciated greatly by those less developed countries which seek outlets for their trade because they wish to help themselves and can only do that in this way.

We shall continue our efforts, particularly in aid directed to the countries in our region and to other Asian countries not directly in the region, for we are not only in, but of, a region where all our neighbours are Asian neighbours. The aid should be designed, except during disaster, not for consumption but for capital formation and the imparting of skills and knowledge and technologies which permit the end benefit of the original aid provided to be many times multiplied in those countries in which those skills and technologies and efforts are expended.

This we must and will continue, but here, as in the field of Defence, we should balance proposals for the growth rate of such expenditure with proposals for the growth and development of Australia itself. What we are doing, and what we are committed to do in the fields both of Defence and of Foreign Aid, is a clear indication that we are no isolationist nation, and we will not be, that we will not withdraw into ourselves and let Defence and Foreign Aid take care of themselves. But the level of what we are doing, and the rate of growth of what we are doing in both these fields must be regarded in the context of our own resources and our own needs, again and all the time, and the requirement so to grow ourselves that we will be able in the years ahead to be able to provide more and yet more into our own protection and into the development and help of the countries so close to us.

I have spent some time on these matters of great importance to this nation in its place in the world. We are, I think, providing all that a nation of 12 million, a nation with a population not much greater than that of Greater New York or Greater London can be expected to provide towards Defence and towards Foreign Assistance.

We will continue to expand what we are doing in these fields, as indeed we must, but we will test each proposal against the requirements for the peaceful development of our own nation and the production of industrial muscles in our own nation to enable it to become great, to do yet more in the world in which it finds itself.

I turn now to questions which are more domestic. What is it - don't all answer, please, because I am going to tell you the answer - what is it that Australians throughout this nation would want to see done in the domestic field. I will tell you what I think it is they would want to see .

I believe that what they would want first to see is that there should be maintained, as has been brilliantly maintained for 18 years for Australians, the opportunity for full employment of all those who are willing and able to work for the advancement of their nation. And if I may say so to somebody from the back who called out something which sounded to me like "Our Henry", in no State has there been more jobs provided and less unemployment than there has over the years been in this State of Victoria. This, I think, is what Australians would want to see maintained and maintained with it, I suggest, they would want to see that rates of taxation already significantly high should not be so increased, that the incentive to work harder or better or to earn more should be reduced, because not only would that be bad for the individual but bad for the nation of which the individual is a living part.

And they would want to see, I suggest, that rates of inflation were kept to a level where they could be absorbed without discomfort

and without leading to that kind of bust and lack of employment and industrial chaos which can occur if they get out of control. These are the frameworks, I believe, that Australians have had and would want to keep, and these are constricting frameworks.

(Interjection - "What about constricting profits?")

Do you really want to restrict profits if somebody makes it legitimately? If somebody invents something which benefits the community in which he lives? If somebody discovers a better way and a cheaper way of producing something, and is able to introduce that into a factory and to give to the people of this country something at a cheaper price while yet he makes higher profits? Do you want to stop him making profits so that this better article at a cheaper price is not available? Because that is not Liberal philosophy. That is the direct antithesis of it. (Applause)

But this background which I have put to you which it is essential to keep and which the people of this country would want to keep, I think, is restricting when we consider all the things that need to be done both by Commonwealth and State - and local governments - throughout Australia. There is a tendency to suggest that the solution to this is just to make more money available here, there or the other place, and yet you know - even you who are interjecting know if you put your mind to it that this is true - if you have your manpower fully employed, and if you have your materials and resources fully employed, then injecting further amounts of money does not get more things done, it only gets either a smaller amount of things done or the same amount of things done at a greater price, unless, of course, you take action to prevent some field of activity from continuing.

And so these are restricting matters, but within the levels of those restrictions I should put to you what my Government will seek to do as and when it can in these fields, and indicate the matters we think of significance in this all-embracing word "development". I have used this before, of course, "development", and it has been rightly pointed out that this is a word which covers a vast area of Australia's activity. Too often it is assumed to be merely that kind of development which takes place in country areas by the building of dams or the building of beef roads or some other activity of that kind. Essential as these forms of development are, they are not the only meaning of development even in that kind of context, for we have here developing in Australia, cities which are going to be at least twice as large as they are now, and cities in which the congestion of traffic is going to pose really vast economic problems in the future and the beginning of studies by Commonwealth and State Governments which I would hope would take place, which I would seek to see did take place, into this matter and how it could be overcome, must take its place with development, alongside the development of areas outside the cities.

This is governmental development, of course, but side by side with it must go, as we have seen happening lately so much, development which takes place because of private initiative, because of individual willingness to risk, because of willingness to go out and seek and find and develop which we have seen happening, and which is happening now for the benefit of all of us throughout the whole of Australia. Again, it is necessary to see that the public sector of development, necessary though it is, is not so expended that no incentive is left, that no ability is left in the private sector to take their share in development which ultimately is the basis of a nation's life.

But these are material things. These are the developments

of industrial muscles as I have said before, and these are not in themselves enough to make a nation great. But no nation can be great unless it seeks not only materially to progress but also to take care of the weaker within it, the aged within it, the ill within it.

Now this, too, must be a goal for any nation seeking to attain greatness, and this will be the examination of these problems, one of the first matters to which my Government would direct its attention. Indeed, it has begun to do so already in the field health, and indeed there has already been some indication of that in announcements just recently made.

We have here, and I expand on this matter only as an example of the way in which we would approach these problems, we have here in Australia a health scheme which is good, which is amongst the best in the world, which permits choice by the patient of the doctor, which does not ration hospital or other accommodation. But it is a health scheme which still suffers from disabilities. It is tending to become rather too dear for many people for them to be enabled to insure themselves for all the benefits which they should be able to achieve.

And it suffers from the further - and I think crippling - disability that it does not cover those who have long-continuing illnesses for a year or two years or three years, and does not prevent the fear not only of that illness but the fear of the economic hardship, indeed in some cases the economic ruin which can flow from such long-continued illness. This will be a first matter to which we shortly will be directing our attention and which we will seek, and I believe successfully seek, to overcome. (Cheers and applause).

Mr President, I have sought at this by-election to put before the people of this electorate and those who may be listening in, unequivocally our approach to the problems of Defence, of our involvement in Viet Nam and Malaysia, of the course we would seek to follow in Foreign Aid, and I have indicated, and only indicated by example what it is we would wish to see happen at home.

I cannot tell you, and no politician of any party standing here could tell you exactly when and exactly how quickly these goals we've set before us will be achieved because there are so many unknown factors. We don't know what those things we produce will be sold for abroad. We don't know what rate of capital inflow there will be. We don't know what is going to happen in many other fields. But we do know this that these things, as a government, are of importance to us, and that we will, paying attention to the constricting things which I said to you at the beginning, seek to overcome them, and the first amongst them, areas where there is injustice - I won't say injustice - areas where there is need, real need amongst our people.

This is not simple, even in the field of health of which I have spoken to you it is not simple. We don't yet know - and I believe nobody yet knows - exactly what area of geriatric treatment ought to be provided in existing-type hospitals, exactly what would happen if we sought more to provide visiting nursing assistance for the aged and elderly so they could stay in their own homes.

All these things are matters which the Department of

Health and the Minister for Health has been examining for weeks, and is examining now and about which you will hear from us as soon as may be.

There will always be left areas in which we are not able to provide what we would wish to provide, and you are not able to get what you would wish to get. Right now, we are in what I call the tantalising years. We can see coming into this country - 1970, 1971 and thereafter - huge revenues from the mineral and oil resources, and other resources which have been discovered and which will by then shed their full benefit on the people of Australia. But they are not here yet; we can see them coming. Even when they do come, while we will be able to make great advances, I think it probable that as has been the case in every nation throughout history, neither the central Commonwealth Government nor any State Government will ever have the capacity to do all the things it would want to do as quickly as it would want to do them and still leave in the hands of individual citizens that which should be left in their hands.

But we are moving towards it and we will move more rapidly towards it, and we can see coming up a time when great movement in that direction can be made.

May I, Mr President, mention one more matter? Somebody called out about, I think, and that is the question of education. I mention it, of course, because it is something with which for some years I have been personally quite concerned, and a matter for which, should you wish to do so, I could be properly blamed if you thought it right, or I could be accepted if you thought it right.

I want to put before you, both as an indication of what has been done and as an earnest of what could be done in the future because of what has been done in the past, as an indication again of the approach of this Government, what has gone on in this field, a field traditionally that of the States.

I was first appointed as the Minister Assisting the then Prime Minister in Education and affairs in the financial year 1963/64. In that year, we were expending from the Commonwealth \$57 million. The next year that went up to \$94M. In 1965/66, it went up to \$104 million. About that time, I became a full Minister. In 1966/67, it went up to \$127 million, and this year, ladies and gentlemen, it has gone up to \$175 million.

(Interjection - "Not enough"). Of course, someone will say "not enough", but in four years from \$57 million to \$175, with the State contribution increasing too, with a doubling of enrolments in universities, with the introduction of colleges of advanced education, with the building within this electorate in some cases of secondary level technical schools such as the one at Caulfield, these can be seen as monuments, they don't have to be heard just as words from a platform, they don't have to be just listened to as monetary figures. They can be seen as monuments throughout this State and throughout this nation, and I believe that if you will support me in Higgins and I have the backing - as I have the backing of the Coalition parties to this Government - that there will be throughout Australia more and more monuments in more and more fields to the benefit of the people of Australia, and built by co-operation between the Commonwealth Government and the various State Governments as we have seen happen

in the field of education.

No promises. No specific promises.....

(Interjection : "Why not?")

I have told you why not. But you will be able to judge by what we do between now and the next elections. You have an indication of our thinking and of our goals.

Perhaps there is one specific promise that I can give you. I will ask from you for all that you can give towards building this State and this nation, and I will in return pledge to you all that I can give and my colleagues can give for a joint effort to see that together we can open the door of the destiny that lies before us.
