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PARIS AS SITE FOR VIET NAM TALKS

Comment by the Prime Minister, Mr John Gorton

The Australian Government welcomes the fact that a site for talks has now been agreed between the United States and Hanoi, and that a date for beginning the talks has been set.

The selection of the site accords with the views of the Australian Government which has been kept constantly informed over the past few weeks by the United States Government as to suggestions for a site, and which has publicly and privately expressed the view that we thought it preferable for the site to be one which was neutral.

Our views on this matter have also been exchanged in communications with the Government of the Republic of Viet Nam and with other countries contributing forces to Viet Nam.

We believe that what has been agreed is a step forward. But it is only one step and it is likely that long and hard negotiations lie ahead before we will know whether those negotiations will in fact lead to the hoped for just and lasting peace.

CANBERRA,
4 May 1968