

WASHINGTON

JOINT COMMUNIQUE  
ISSUED BY PRESIDENT JOHNSON AND  
PRIME MINISTER GORTON

28 MAY 1968

At the invitation of President Lyndon B. Johnson of the United States, the Rt. Hon. J. G. Gorton, Prime Minister of Australia, paid an official visit to Washington on 27 and 28 May. This was Prime Minister Gorton's first visit to the United States since assuming office. It afforded the President and the Prime Minister an opportunity to exchange views on matters of mutual concern, including the situation in South East Asia.

Australia-U. S. Relations

The President and the Prime Minister reviewed the current state of Australia-U. S. relations. They expressed profound satisfaction that the historic partnership between their two countries was continuing to deepen and grow in significance for the security and progress of the Pacific region. They re-affirmed specifically the importance of the ANZUS Treaty as an expression of the United States' continuing strategic interest in the region and the continuing co-operation of the two Governments in the maintenance of stability and security in Asia and the Pacific.

The Prime Minister and the President expressed their gratification with the existing scientific co-operation between the two countries. Such co-operation has advanced the state of science not only to the benefit of both countries but to mankind generally. They agreed that the special assistant to the President for science and technology and a team of leading United States' scientists would visit Australia soon to meet with the Australian Minister for Education and Science and his colleagues, to identify additional areas appropriate for co-operative activities and explore ways in which the close co-operation between the American and Australian scientific communities could be broadened and extended.

Stressing the importance of the soundness of the dollar to the maintenance of prosperous international economic conditions, the Prime Minister reiterated his full support for the President's programme to reduce the United States' balance of payments deficit. The President assured the Prime Minister that the United States would strive to avoid undesirable effects on Australia or other nations of measures taken under the programme.

Vietnam

The President and the Prime Minister reviewed in detail the situation in South Vietnam, where Australian and American forces are fighting side by side to assure the right of the Vietnamese people to determine their own destiny free of outside interference. They agreed that the establishment of a just and viable peace called both for a strong military posture and for intensive diplomatic efforts.

The Prime Minister expressed his gratification that the President's initiative of 31 March had led to conversations with North Vietnamese representatives. The President reviewed in detail the progress of these talks to date. He re-affirmed that the United States Government would continue to consult fully with the Australian Government and other allies as the talks proceed. They agreed that the allied nations which have helped to defend the Republic of Vietnam should participate in any settlement of the conflict.

At the invitation of the President, the Prime Minister joined him this morning at his meeting with Mr. Cyrus Vance, who returned from Paris last night. Mr. Vance reported to the President and the Prime Minister on the course of the discussions in Paris with the representatives from North Vietnam.

The President expressed particular appreciation for the warm hospitality which the Australian people have extended to American servicemen on leave from Vietnam.

#### Pacific Regional Co-operation

The President and the Prime Minister reviewed the favourable trends in regional co-operation in the Pacific area which had been noted at the ANZUS and SEATO Council meetings in April 1968. They expressed satisfaction that, despite communist expansionism, many constructive forces are promoting social and economic development in the area. They re-affirmed a hope that the impressive growth of regional groupings in Asia would continue, and expressed willingness to assist in every appropriate and feasible way.

The President and Prime Minister recognized that the United Kingdom's decision to accelerate withdrawal of its military forces from South East Asia increased the need for regional consultation and co-operation in the security field. The President welcomed Australia's interest in the area, and assured the Prime Minister of his keen interest in the progress of the consultations and in the outcome of the forthcoming Five Power Conference in Kuala Lumpur.

---