



VISIT TO SOUTH EAST ASIA 1968

SAIGON

WELCOME BY VIETNAMESE PRIME MINISTER,
TRAN VAN HUONG, AT AIRPORT

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7 JUNE 1968

Mr. Prime Minister, it is a very great pleasure and a very great honour for the Vietnamese people, for the Government of the Republic of Vietnam, and for myself to welcome on our soil today the representative of a people to whom we are bound by so many ties.

Since Vietnam regained its independence and liberty, it has had to defend that independence and that liberty against an enemy who is set on destroying them in order to impose on the Vietnamese people a system of government and a way of life that they rejected as not corresponding with their interests or their best traditions. In this struggle, the Vietnamese people have benefited from the sympathy and support without reservation from the Australian Government and people in all fields - political, military, economic and humanitarian. We are therefore happy to have the opportunity to express through you our gratitude to the Government and people of Australia.

Mr. Prime Minister, you arrive in Vietnam at a time when our common enemy, international communism, is intensifying its efforts with a view to obtaining a seeming military success in order to support his political demands in Paris as elsewhere.

We have decided not to fall into the communist trap. We love and hope for peace, but we will not accept a peace dictated by an enemy who himself knows that he cannot gain victory. We are convinced that the Australian Government and people will continue to work closely with the Vietnamese Government and people, as with the other nations which are friends and allies of Vietnam, in order to prevent communism spreading south of the 17th parallel.

Mr. Prime Minister, in the name of the Vietnamese people and Government, I bid you welcome and a pleasant and fruitful time in Vietnam.
