

SINGAPORE

ARRIVAL STATEMENT MADE BY THE PRIME MINISTER,  
MR. JOHN GORTON

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9 JUNE 1968

When I passed through Singapore last week in transit to Vietnam I explained that my official visit here would be part of a tour which included several South-East Asian countries. This tour is not merely one of goodwill on my part as the new Prime Minister of Australia. It reflects the need for an Australian Prime Minister today to widen his knowledge of Australia's neighbours in South-East Asia and to gain, at first hand, experience of the problems which they face and the policies they are pursuing.

I shall be having talks over the next two days with your Prime Minister, Mr. Lee Kuan Yew, and his colleagues, and renewing my personal acquaintance with a number of them. I expect to give them an account of my visit to Vietnam and there will be exchanges of views on various regional questions of concern to both Governments.

My visit is not connected with the Five-Power defence talks now commencing in Kuala Lumpur, although my discussions here will naturally include defence and security matters of common interest. The kind of South-East Asian region that develops in the years ahead, and the pace of its development, is of vital interest to our two countries. We have the same basic concern to see in the South-East Asian region a community of co-operating nations and a climate of order and stability for national development.

I look forward to seeing something of the social and industrial achievements which are so dramatically changing the appearance of your island. I also hope to learn more about your expansion programmes for your harbours, shipping, communications and commercial facilities and for your development and regional economic progress. Relations between Australia and Singapore are firmly based on useful and practical co-operation.

We are both developing peoples, determined to use the benefits of knowledge and modern technology for our progress and a better life for our peoples. This is shown by the extensive range of contacts and exchanges between our two communities, embracing commerce and education, the professions, tourism and the arts.

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