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AUSTRALIAN FORCES IN MALAYSIA-SINGAPORE

Statement by the Prime Minister, Mr John Gorton

On 19 November, I announced in Parliament that Australia had decided in principle to maintain forces in Malaysia and Singapore until the end of 1971.

Since then technical consideration of the detailed implementation of this "in principle" decision has continued. This having been concluded, Australia and New Zealand have now indicated to Malaysia and Singapore their firm willingness to maintain Naval, Air and Army Forces in the area.

It is planned that two Australian squadrons of Mirage aircraft will be based at Butterworth with a detachment in Singapore and that an Australian Naval element will continue to be stationed in Singapore.

At an appropriate stage during the British withdrawal from Terendak, the Australian and New Zealand Army contingents will move to Singapore, with a detachment stationed at Butterworth.

A full statement on these matters will be made when Parliament resumes.

In the meantime any reports on the disposition of forces after the end of 1971 are pure speculation; this is a matter which remains under discussion between Governments.

CANBERRA,
3 January 1969