

FOR PRESS:

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TRADE WITH NORTH VIETNAM

Statement by the Prime Minister, Mr. John Gorton

The Prime Minister, Mr. Gorton, today restated the Government's long established policy that there should be no trade - either by way of exports or imports - with North Vietnam.

The Government held firmly to the view that in present circumstances, it would be most unfortunate and inappropriate for persons to engage in such trade for private gain while Australian forces were fighting in South Vietnam.

The Attorney-General, Mr. Bowen, recently pointed out that there were adequate powers under existing legislation to give effect to the policy of recent years. It had, however, now been decided to introduce new regulations under the Customs Act specifically relating to North Vietnam and these regulations were today approved by the Executive Council.

The new regulations will prohibit exports to, or imports from, North Vietnam without the written permission of the Minister for Customs and Excise. As there has been no commercial trade with North Vietnam in recent years the new controls will have no adverse effect on the Australian trading community. They will, however, remove any doubts about Government policy and the adequacy of measures to implement that policy.

CANBERRA
31 January 1969