

EMBARGO: 7.15 p.m. - 10 October

RADIO TALK NO. 1

1969 FEDERAL ELECTION

TALK GIVEN BY THE PRIME MINISTER, MR. JOHN GORTON,
OVER ABC NETWORK ON FRIDAY 10 OCTOBER

Proper defence is the foundation on which any nation's security is built.

If we are to run our own affairs in our own Australian way - if we are in the future to be subjected neither to attack nor the threat of attack - then defence is essential. It is the more essential to us now we are becoming increasingly isolated, and the adequate defence of Australia demands two approaches.

One is that we should build up, over the years ahead, our own defence forces; that we should have a standing Army of at least its present size - backed by a modern C.M.F.; that our Navy should grow; that our Air Force should have the best aircraft obtainable; that, in short, we should look to our own efforts for our own defence.

The second is that we should retain and strengthen the alliances we have; that we should play our part in such alliances, particularly with the United States, and should be prepared to give, as well as expect to receive, help.

You know that we, of the Liberal Party coalition, will maintain and strengthen our own forces. But you have been told by the Opposition that they will not. They have undertaken to abolish National Service training, thereby reducing our Army by a third.

They have undertaken not to acquire the F-111 strike aircraft, even though the Air Force advice is that Australia needs this aircraft and that it is the best strike aircraft in the world today.

They have undertaken to equip the Navy not with what the Navy wants but with a few patrol boats only.

So under Labor, our own defences would deteriorate just when they should be improving. This is bad enough but even more disastrous would be the effect of Labor's policies on our alliances.

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They propose to withdraw at once from Vietnam unilaterally, just at the time when President Nixon is calling for steadfastness, so that the enemy will negotiate a peace giving the South Vietnamese a choice of government. I can think of nothing more calculated to damage our standing or to drive America into isolationism.

They propose to withdraw all our forces from Malaysia/Singapore and, in practice, to wash our hands of helping in the military defence of the region to our North. Again, there could be nothing more calculated to deter Britain and the United States coming to the help of that region, the destiny of which affects our destiny, in case of attack.

They propose to quibble and cavil and renegotiate the question of defence bases in Australia, even though these bases are for common defence, to help our defence, as well as that of the United States.

So their proposals boil down to reducing and rendering less effective our own defence forces and to taking international action which will weaken ANZUS, strengthen isolationism in the United States, deter Britain from helping Malaysia/Singapore and damage severely our own standing.

We will do none of these things. The Labor Party undertakes to do them all. This is perhaps the greatest issue for you to decide on October 25.

I hope and believe that for our nation's future security you will decide our policies are best for Australia and for Australia's future.

Note: This talk will be broadcast by the ABC National Network at 7.15 p. m. (EST).