

FOR PRESS :

PM. No. 82/1971

V I E T N A M C O R R E S P O N D E N C E

In accordance with his undertaking to the House of Representatives last night (18 August), the Prime Minister, Mr William McMahon, today tabled photocopies of the following correspondence :

Marked "A" is a copy of a letter dated 29 April 1965, sent by the Australian Ambassador to the Republic of Vietnam to His Excellency, Dr Phan Huy Quat, Prime Minister of the Republic of Vietnam; and

Marked "B" is a copy of a letter dated 29 April 1965 sent by His Excellency, Dr Phan Huy Quat, Prime Minister of the Republic of Vietnam to the Australian Ambassador of the Republic of Vietnam.

CANBERRA,
19 August 1971

BACKGROUND :

In a statement released to the Press on 22 June, 1971, the Prime Minister said :

"It should be remembered that in July 1964 the Prime Minister of South Vietnam, then Major-General Nguyen Khanh, in a published letter addressed to the Heads of State of 34 countries, including Australia, had appealed for 'all the support you deem possible and opportune in order to help us successfully fight the communist aggression.'

And as I have pointed out on another occasion, the Prime Minister of South Vietnam, Mr Tran Van Huong, in December 1964 in discussion with the Australian Minister for Air, then visiting Vietnam, and the Australian Ambassador, asked for an increased Australian military contribution.

Mr Huong said the situation was now such that large scale assistance was urgently needed from all free nations 'in every form but particularly military'.

On 29 April there was an exchange of letters between the Australian Ambassador and the Prime Minister of South Vietnam.

In these letters, the Australian Government offered to send a battalion if one were requested, and the South Vietnamese Government accepted this offer and made its request in terms conforming with the requirements of the South-East Asia Treaty. "

A

29th April, 1965

Your Excellency,

I have the honour, with reference to our conversation yesterday, to confirm the Australian Government's offer to send to Viet Nam an infantry battalion of 800 men, with some 100 personnel in logistic support, to serve with United States forces in assisting in the defence of the Republic of Viet Nam.

I have informed the Australian Government, following our conversation, that Your Excellency has accepted this offer and has requested the despatch of this force to Viet Nam on the basis which we discussed.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(H.D. Anderson)
Ambassador

His Excellency Dr Phan Huy Quat,
Prime Minister of the Republic of
Viet Nam,
SAIGON

VIỆT-NAM CỘNG-HÒA

THỦ-TƯỚNG PHỦ

29th April, 1965

No 511-TTP/VP/M

Dear Mr. Ambassador,

I have the honor to refer to your letter of today's date confirming the Australian Government's offer to send to Viet Nam an infantry battalion of 800 men, with some 100 personnel in logistic support to serve with United States forces in assisting in the defence of the Republic of Vietnam.

I wish to confirm my government's acceptance of this offer and to request the dispatch of this force to Viet Nam on the basis which we discussed.

Sincerely,



Rhan-Huy-Quat

RHAN-HUY-QUAT

The Honorable

H. D. Anderson

Ambassador of the government of Australia

Saigon, Vietnam.