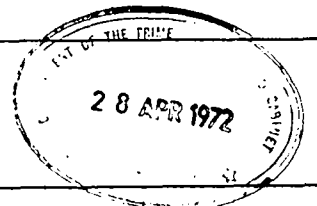


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PRIME MINISTER



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VISIT TO SOUTH-EAST ASIA

It was announced today that the Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. William McMahon, CH, MP, would make official visits to a number of South-East Asian countries in June.

Mr McMahon will visit Indonesia from 5 to 8 June, Singapore from 9 to 11 June and Malaysia from 11 to 14 June.

The visits reflect the Australian Government's long-standing interest in the region and the importance of its friendship with the governments concerned.

The Prime Minister's visits take place at a time of rapid and far-reaching changes in the international scene which affect the whole South-East Asian area. The Prime Minister will take advantage of his visits to discuss with the leaders of the friendly countries of Indonesia, Singapore and Malaysia a wide range of international issues which have a bearing on the region.

Australia shares with her three neighbours similar views on the independence, progress and stability of the region and on the importance of regional co-operation and national resilience. The Prime Minister's visits therefore come at a particularly appropriate time.

Australia's association with Indonesia dates back to the first days of Indonesia's independence. Particularly close relations have been developed in recent years, extending over many fields of co-operative endeavour.

The strength and cordiality of these relations was demonstrated during the successful visit recently made by President and Madame Soeharto to Australia. At that time President Soeharto issued an invitation to the Prime Minister to visit Indonesia and it is in response to this invitation that the Prime Minister's visit will be taking place.

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It is expected that many of the initiatives for deepening Indonesian/Australian relations which were discussed during President Soeharto's visit will be taken forward by the Prime Minister while he is in Djakarta. The Prime Minister looks forward to renewing his close personal relationship with President Soeharto.

The Prime Minister welcomes the opportunity to visit Singapore, a friendly Commonwealth partner with whom Australia shares many interests - bilateral, regional and international. He last visited Singapore in 1971, and it will be a great pleasure to him to renew the friendships then established. He looks forward to fruitful discussions on a wide range of questions of mutual concern to Australia and Singapore.

Australian relations with Malaysia, another Commonwealth partner, have been characterised since their inception by frequent consultations at the highest level. The Prime Minister sees his visit as part of this continuing process. He believes that such consultations will contribute to further improvement in the already close ties which exist between Australia and Malaysia in so many fields.

When details of the programme in the respective countries have been determined they will be announced.

CANBERRA,
19 April, 1972