



PRIME MINISTER

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PRESIDENT NIXON'S VISIT TO THE U.S.S.R.

Statement by the Prime Minister, the Rt Hon. William
McMahon, C.H., M.P.

The Prime Minister, Mr. McMahon, today described President Nixon's recent visit to the Soviet Union as another massive stride along the road towards reducing international tensions and another contribution towards making the world a more peaceful place in which to live in freedom and peace of mind.

In Mr. Nixon's own words, "a foundation has been laid for a new relationship between the two most powerful nations in the world."

Mr. McMahon said that the Australian Government welcomed the agreements signed during the summit meeting and applauded the President's initiative and the constructive approach that both the United States and the Soviet Union has taken in their discussions in Moscow. The agreements limited strategic arms were clearly a significant achievement.

They could well mark an historic turning point in the efforts to halt the arms race and to bring about a meaningful relaxation of world tension.

Mr. McMahon also said he believed that the declaration of basic principles between the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. was significant both in substance and psychologically.

The declared principles opened up new avenues for the development of the future relationship between the two super-powers and must make a contribution towards detente between east and west.

Of particular importance is the undertaking both nations have given to exercise restraint in their mutual relations and to negotiate and settle differences by peaceful means. Among these were Vietnam and the Middle East.

The Prime Minister also said that there are satisfying reasons for expressing our gratitude to President Nixon for the initiatives he had taken towards opening up consultations with Peking and Moscow.

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A real contribution had been made towards reducing many of the previously existing rigid attitudes in international affairs and the tensions which have existed between these three great nations.

Whilst the long-term results of the visits will be seen in the future, the missions had achieved their main purpose.

They had given grounds for the hope that a new era has commenced - an era in which all nations can pursue their aspirations for social and economic progress in an atmosphere of peaceful co-operation.
