



72/60

PRIME MINISTER

FOR PRESS:

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FIVE POWER ARRANGEMENT

Statement by the Prime Minister, The Rt Hon.
William McMahon, CH, MP.

I have read some press reports originating from a television programme in Australia, to the effect that I consider that the existence of a written Five Power Arrangement was not really necessary.

I want to make it clear that the Australian Government considers the Five Power Arrangements with Singapore, Malaysia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom are of great importance.

For their substance they necessarily rely on the sense of mutual interest of the five countries concerned and their goodwill and trust towards each other.

The existence of a written instrument is a necessary framework to permit the practical action to arrange training and disposition of forces and co-operation among those forces and with the host governments.

In Djakarta yesterday, I make some remarks about pacts in general in the context of the question, put to me by an interviewer, as to whether we should have a pact with Indonesia. I pointed out that the historical background to Australian-Indonesian bilateral relations was entirely different from the long standing co-operation in defence matters which has existed with Malaysia and Singapore.

I also made the point that what is vital in any relationship is the totality of it and that pacts and agreements are less important than the goodwill and mutual trust on which they must be based if they are to be effective.

Canberra
3 June 1972.