

Australia and New Zealand To Quit Vietnam This Year

**McMahon Declares All Combat Troops
in 6,000-Man Force Will Return—
Small Training Units to Remain**

By ROBERT TRUMBULL AUG 19 1971

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SYDNEY, Australia, Aug. 18—Australia and New Zealand announced today that they would withdraw their combat forces from South Vietnam in the next few months.

Australian has about 6,000 troops in Vietnam, down from a peak of about 8,000. New Zealand has 264 men in the war zone, about half of the number committed at top strength.

Prime Minister William McMahon announced in Canberra that the bulk of the Australian force would be home by Christmas. Both countries plan to leave small training units in Vietnam.

In Wellington, New Zealand's Prime Minister, Sir Keith Holyoake, said that his country's combat force would be withdrawn from South Vietnam by "about the end of this year."

Many Australians and New Zealanders had spoken of the involvement in Vietnam as allies of the United States as "payment on the insurance policy"—the American guarantee to defend the two Southwest Pacific nations embodied in the 1951 ANZUS treaty of mutual security.

In both countries opponents of the war have marched in the streets and have staged anti-American demonstrations during visits by United States officials, including Vice President Agnew and Secretary of State William P. Rogers. In Sydney students demonstrated violently during a visit by Lyndon B. Johnson when he was President.

Australian opinion polls, while showing consistent majority support for the United

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Australia and New Zealand

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States in Vietnam, in recent months have also indicated a gradual drop in support.

Among youths here, opposition to the war has been linked with protests against the draft. Mr. McMahon, in announcing the withdrawal from Vietnam, also stated that the period of active service required of draftees would be reduced from two years to 18 months, and that the army's strength would be cut from 44,000 to 40,000.

\$28-Million in Aid Planned

Mr. McMahon said that South Vietnamese forces now "are in a position to take over the Australian assignment for the security of Phuoc Tuy Province, a coastal area southeast of Saigon.

The Prime Minister added that Australia did not mean to "leave the South Vietnamese to themselves" and would allot \$28-million in economic aid to Saigon over the next three years for civil projects.

Exactly a year ago, Australia announced the withdrawal of a battalion of about 1,000 troops and a defense-aid grant of \$3.6-million to Saigon.

Australian forces serving in South Vietnam have suffered casualties of 416 dead in combat and 2,343 wounded in action. The monetary cost to Australia of active participation in the war has been put at more than \$240-million.

Of the major allies of the United States in South Vietnam, only the 50,000-man South Korean force has yet to start to withdraw.

Thailand is withdrawing half of her 12,000-man infantry division and is to pull out the remaining 6,000 troops early

next year. The Philippines withdrew her 2,000 soldiers about three years ago.

Washington Comments

WASHINGTON, Aug. 18 (AP) —The State Department press officer, Robert J. McCloskey, said today that the announced withdrawal of Australian and New Zealand troops from Vietnam was "in harmony with our own withdrawal program and the Vietnamization effort."

He said the announcement was no surprise because consultations with the allies on their previous troop pullouts "always assumed an ultimate withdrawal."

President Nixon's current round of American troop withdrawals calls for a reduction to 184,000 men by Dec. 1. Mr. Nixon is expected to announce a schedule for further withdrawals this year.

In New York, where President Nixon was visiting, the White House press secretary, Ronald L. Ziegler, said:

"I understand that there was full consultation with the South Vietnamese Government regarding withdrawal of Australian forces from South Vietnam. And this further indicates the South Vietnamese ability to provide for their own defense."