



Australian Government



NATIONAL  
ARCHIVES  
OF AUSTRALIA

# Your story, our history

These copies are provided for research or study purposes. Before making use of the material for other purposes (for example publication) you should familiarise yourself with any copyright obligations.

**NAA: A5909, 319**

Series number: A5909

Control symbol: 319

Barcode: 4290980

Number of pages: 2

Cabinet Minute - Withdrawal of Australian Force from Vietnam - Without Submission

C A B I N E T      M I N U T E

Canberra, 26 July 1971

---

Decision No. 319

---

Without Submission      -      Withdrawal of Australian Force from  
Vietnam.

The Cabinet took up the question of the future of the Australian forces in Vietnam.

2.            It conducted its discussion in the light of the development in United States policy, which the U.S. President's proposal to visit Peking implies and in the light also of the report of the Defence Committee already received.
3.            It noted that there could be no assumption that the United States would not now speed up its own programme of withdrawal.
4.            Further, on the basis of the Defence Committee papers, including the minute of the Chiefs of Staff Committee, and the observations concerning the capacity of the South Vietnamese regular forces to maintain security, with particular reference to the capacity of local forces in Phuoc Tuy province, it took the view that early decision to withdraw the Australian forces was inevitable.
5.            In the circumstances, it decided that it should move immediately to withdraw and to do so to an "accelerated" timetable. In respect of the Task Force it would be the objective that the first of the two remaining battalions be withdrawn in October 1971 and the second in December 1971.

../2

TOP SECRET

2.

Decision No. 319 (Continued)

6. Having regard to the considerable amount of detailed planning required to give effect to this decision, the Cabinet agreed that the Prime Minister should have authority to make an early announcement which, without disclosing the present decision, would nevertheless look towards withdrawal. It might indicate that with the South Vietnamese increasingly taking over the combat role and with the Vietnamization programme being extended, there need no longer be a combat role for Australian forces.

Certified true copy

*R. J. Bunting*  
Secretary to Cabinet.

TOP SECRET