

CABLEGRAM.

TOP SECRET. 9

DBB:MB:MK:MB.

Copy No. 9/13

O. 5113 to 5121-5124 to 5133.

Sent: 26th May, 1954.  
1030

TO:

Australian Delegation to Geneva Conference,  
GENEVA.....GC. 35.

19	311	217

Australian Embassy,  
WASHINGTON.....365. (Pass to Ottawa 104.)

Australian High Commissioner's Office,  
LONDON.....1178. (For External.)

Australian High Commissioner's Office,  
WELLINGTON.....152.

Australian Embassy,  
PARIS.....127.

Australian Legation,  
SINGAPORE.....Saving 55. (For your information only.)

Australian High Commissioner's Office,  
NEW DELHI.....Saving 12. (For your information only.)

Australian Commissioner's Office,  
SINGAPORE.....Saving 66. (For your information only.)

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In view of complex and sometimes conflicting developments in Geneva, Washington, and elsewhere, we feel it necessary to summarize Australian position at this stage so that misunderstanding will not exist. We note, for example, reports of United States and French references to expectation that Australia may, after elections, join in "collective defence" or "action by allies". Following should be used by you in talking to government to which you are accredited.

2. Australia has agreed to examine with other countries possibility of a collective defence in South-East Asia. It has also agreed to Five-Power Staff Agency talks to undertake military planning studies in order to recommend possible courses of action to enable an effective line of resistance to further Communist aggression or infiltration in South-East Asia to be established. Agency will examine all possible courses of action in light of current situation and known capabilities of anti-Communist countries. Military studies by agency would be without commitment to governments participating

3. Australia has not agreed to internationalization of military operations in Indo-China. The Government is naturally reluctant to consider long-term commitments on eve of elections which will decide who is to have responsibility for next three years. However, elections are not only or even principal reason why no Australian decision has yet been taken in favour of internationalization and in order to prevent misunderstandings you should make this quite clear to Government to which you are accredited.

4. Australian Government does not consider it yet appropriate to make decision on internationalization of military operations because -

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no more than the alternative to join or not to join in an internationalized war initiated by one or other of the powers.

12. In brief Australia considers every effort should be made at Geneva to reach a negotiated settlement in Indo-China on honourable and reasonable terms. We do not necessarily reject possibility of partition of Vietnam (combined probably with preservation of Laos and Cambodia) as an acceptable settlement (provided it is supported by effective "guarantee") and one that would be preferable to alternatives set out in paragraph 5 above. If a settlement is reached the possibilities would be good of securing a collective defence which would either include South and South East Asian States or have their sympathy. Mr. Casey on several occasions has publicly stressed importance Australia attaches to Asian opinion and also to fact that military assistance to any State is useless unless the government of that particular state desires it. We attach importance to continuance of United Kingdom efforts to lead opinion in India, Pakistan and Burma.

13. If Geneva appears to have failed, Governments concerned should then consult and agree that it has failed irrevocably. It is right to be discussing privately now the implications of this and the purposes and potential effects of internationalization. We are well aware how essential it is for Australia and rest of free world not to give United States impression that it is being deserted by its allies. At same time American (or French) proposals must be examined on their military and political merits.

14. Provided we keep our objectives and commitments under full examination and control it is right too to apply to Communists a deterrent in the form of evidence that France's friends are considering serious steps if there is no settlement.

15. Indications are that Russians are also conscious of dangers of hostilities widening. But time is short as Geneva Conference will probably break up soon if no progress is made there on Indo-China question. In our view the time has come for some confidential and frank exchanges between United States and U.S.S.R. and Chinese Communists in addition to present United Kingdom and French efforts. If in the long run situation worsens and drastic action is required, our own public opinion and Asian opinion will expect to be assured that every effort was made to find peaceful solution.

16. Please inform us of reaction to your discussions.

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MIN. & DEPT. E.A.  
MIN. & DEPT. DEFENCE.  
P.M.'S.

27th May, 1954.

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Situation in Indo China - Australian policy