

**JOINT COMMUNIQUE ISSUED BY THE FIFTH MINISTERIAL
MEETING OF THE ASIAN AND PACIFIC COUNCIL**

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1. At the invitation of the Government of New Zealand, the Fifth Ministerial Meeting of the Asian and Pacific Council, comprising Australia, the Republic of China, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, the Kingdom of Thailand and the Republic of Vietnam met in Wellington, New Zealand, from June 17, 1970. An observer from the Kingdom of Laos attended all sessions of the Meeting.
2. In his opening address the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of New Zealand, Rt. Hon. Sir Keith Holyoake, extended a warm welcome to the visiting delegates. He suggested that the Council might be concerned both to explore new avenues for cooperation between the ASPAC countries and to consider how these countries, individually and in partnership, could help bring peace, stability and progress to the Asian and Pacific region. The objective of regional cooperation, the Prime Minister emphasized, was to develop a new community in which all the peoples of the area could live and work together in dignity and freedom.
3. Over a period of three days the Ministers discussed a wide range of international issues in general and the current situation in the Asian and Pacific region in particular. They expressed their concern and apprehension over the tense situation in their region arising out of the stepping up of hostilities which were also threatening to disturb world peace and security. They gave particular attention to the implications for the region of the changing policies of the major powers, the growing strength of a number of countries within the region, and the renewed efforts to establish areas of partnership between the countries of Asia and the Pacific. They recognised that in a period of rapid change and development there was a need for regional cooperation on the widest possible basis.
4. The Ministers reaffirmed their belief that the primary responsibility for dealing with the problems of the Asian and Pacific area lay with the countries of the region. They also reaffirmed their profound conviction that the less powerful nations of the area are entitled to the full recognition, scrupulous observance, and strict respect, by more powerful states, of their desire to live in peace, independence and harmony. They expressed the willingness of their Governments to join with other Governments and associations in the area in seeking ways and means of reducing tension and promoting stability and peaceful development. They believed that this would help promote a growing consensus among the nations of the region which would transcend differences of outlook and encourage new and promising initiatives.
5. The Ministers considered that the Djakarta Conference on Cambodia was a significant example of the manner in which countries of the region could work together in an endeavour to restore peace to an area of immediate concern to them. They expressed the hope that the process of consultation adopted by the Djakarta

Conference would help bring about a peaceful settlement in Cambodia and stimulate further initiatives towards solving some of the outstanding problems of the region.

6. Recognising that the present year marked the twenty-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, the Ministers reaffirmed their strong support for the purposes and principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter, and in particular the provisions for the resolution by peaceful means of disputes among nations.

7. In reviewing the situation in the Indo-China area the Ministers noted that the level of hostilities had diminished in Vietnam but expressed their grave concern at the stepping up of hostilities in Laos and Cambodia. The Ministers noted with satisfaction the continuing progress achieved by the Government of the Republic of Vietnam particularly in the fields of pacification, rural reconstruction and land reform. They were also encouraged by the successful effort of the Government and the people of the Republic of Vietnam in strengthening the country's security and in assuming increasing responsibility for their self-defense. They expressed disappointment that the search for a negotiated solution of the Vietnam conflict had not so far succeeded, and urged that new efforts be made to get substantive negotiations under way to work out a just and lasting settlement. The Ministers reaffirmed their deep sympathy for the Republic of Vietnam, the Kingdom of Laos, and Cambodia in their efforts to preserve their independence and freedom. The Ministers suggested that each ASPAC member might consider what assistance it would be able to give to Laos and Cambodia. They expressed the view that the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and strict neutrality of Cambodia and Laos should be respected in accordance with international agreements applicable to these two countries and the provisions of the United Nations Charter. They agreed that, when hostilities had ceased, there would be an urgent need for a substantial external contribution to the rehabilitation of the whole Indo-China area.

8. The Ministers discussed with concern recent developments on the Chinese mainland. In view of their implications for Asian and Pacific nations they agreed that it was necessary to follow future developments closely.

9. The Ministers were pleased to note that the developing members of ASPAC have continued to enjoy a satisfactory rate of economic growth. They were particularly gratified over the fact that the Republic of China, once a recipient of economic aid, now has a sizeable programme of economic and technical cooperation in many developing countries in various parts of the world.

10. In reviewing the situation in the Korean peninsula the Ministers expressed their concern at the continuing tension caused by provocative and aggressive acts against the Republic of Korea, including the hijacking of a Korean passenger plane on December 11, 1969 and the seizure of a Republic of Korea Navy broadcasting vessel on June 5, 1970. The Ministers expressed the hope that, from the humanitarian point of view, the detained crew members and passengers of the said plane and vessel be returned without any further delay. They warmly commended the successful efforts of the Government and people of the Republic of Korea to strengthen the country's position in order to safeguard its national security and to sustain rapid development of its national economy.

11. The Ministers expressed regret that atmospheric tests of nuclear weapons continued to be held in the Asian and Pacific Region despite the Partial Test Ban