

Jun 1965 - Australian and New Zealand Troops for South Vietnam. - Dispatch of South Korea Units.

The Australian Prime Minister, Sir Robert Menzies, announced in the House of Representatives on April 29 that in response to a request from the South Vietnamese Government an Australian infantry battalion of about 800 men would be sent to South Vietnam, as "the most useful additional contribution we can make to the defence of the region." Mr. Arthur Calwell, the Leader of the Opposition, affirmed on May 4 the "firm and complete" opposition of the Australian Labour Party to the Government's decision, which, he said, would confront Australia with a "cruel, costly, and interminable war."

The New Zealand Prime Minister, Mr. Holyoake, announced on May 27 that a New Zealand artillery battery would be sent to South Vietnam, where it would serve alongside the Australian infantry battalion in the "Anzac" tradition. He disclosed that South Vietnam had appealed to New Zealand for combatant assistance on May 10, and expressed the belief that the great majority of New Zealanders would support the Government's decision. The dispatch of a New Zealand unit was approved by the N.Z. Parliament on May 28 by 39 votes to 33, after a debate in which the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Nordmeyer, expressed "grave doubts" about the wisdom of New Zealand's military involvement in South Vietnam because of its heavy commitments in Malaysia.

Over 800 troops of the 1st Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, had arrived in South Vietnam by air and sea on June 8; it was stated that they would be stationed at the South Vietnamese base of Bien Hoa. In Wellington, it was announced on May 31 that a battery of the 16th Field Regiment would be sent to South Vietnam to operate in support of the Australian infantry.

The South Korea National Assembly had previously approved on Jan. 26 a proposal by the Government to send about 2,000 non-combatant troops to South Vietnam, including an engineer battalion, a transport battalion, and security troops.—(Australian News and Information Bureau - New Zealand High Commissioner's Office, London - New York Times)(**Prev. rep. Vietnam War, 20759 A; Australian and New Zealand Aid to South Vietnam page [20466](#)**)