



PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

13 January 1984

Following invitations from the Governments of Japan, the Republic of Korea, China, Singapore and Malaysia, I will be visiting North East and South East Asia early in February. I have been keen to pay early visits to these countries in Australia's neighbourhood, all in different ways of great importance to Australia's future.

The first country on my itinerary is Japan (31 January - 4 February). Australia and Japan have developed an extremely close economic partnership, which has acquired deepening political importance as our mutual interests in the Western Pacific area have expanded over recent years. I will have an audience with His Majesty the Emperor and will attend a lunch which he will host. I expect to have discussions in Tokyo with Prime Minister Nakasone and his Cabinet colleagues on a range of bilateral issues as well as exchange views on regional and international developments.

I am keen to see something of Japan's industry and consequently I will visit Osaka. I also wish to inform Japanese business leaders about the Australian Government's economic policies which are important in building further the trade and economic ties between our countries.

From Japan I will travel to the Republic of Korea (4 - 7 February). ROK President Chun was to visit Australia in October of last year but was prevented from doing so because of the bombing tragedy in Rangoon which resulted in a postponement of his visit.

Australia and the Republic of Korea have a rapidly developing political and trade relationship and my visit will provide an opportunity to have discussions with President Chun and his Government on a wide range of issues of mutual interest. In addition to bilateral matters, Australia has a close interest in strategic developments affecting the Korean Peninsula and this I expect will be discussed in Seoul.

I will then pay my first visit as Prime Minister to China (7 - 12 February). In the years that followed the decision by the Whitlam Labor Government to establish diplomatic relations between Australia and the Peoples Republic of China, successive Australian Governments have worked to expand the wide-ranging and close relations which exist between the two countries.

When Premier Zhao visited Australia in April last year, he invited me to go to China to continue and develop the close dialogue which was given fresh impetus during his stay in our country. I look forward to doing this.

In addition to Peking, I will visit Shanghai.

I will visit Singapore (12 - 14 February).

During the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in New Delhi last November, I held useful discussions with Prime Minister Lee and the Foreign Minister of Singapore.

It was agreed that it was important that Australia and Singapore should maintain the momentum of these contacts and I accepted the suggestion of Prime Minister Lee to call in to Singapore on my return from North East Asia.

I have not yet had the privilege of meeting Dr Mahathir, the Prime Minister of Malaysia, so I propose to briefly visit Kuala Lumpur to meet with him and members of his Government on 14 February.

Australia's relations with ASEAN are of major importance. During the course of last year, I visited both Indonesia and Thailand; to be able to have discussions with Malaysia and Singapore during the course of this visit will broaden the range of my contacts with ASEAN leaders, and further strengthen Australia's already solid relationship with the nations of the South-East Asian region.

The itinerary is:

- Hong Kong, 29 - 31 January
- Tokyo, 31 January - 3 February
- Osaka, 3 - 4 February
- Seoul, 4 - 7 February
- Peking, 7 - 11 February
- Shanghai, 11 - 12 February
- Singapore, 12 - 14 February
- Kuala Lumpur, 14 - 15 February