

EMBARGOED AGAINST  
DELIVERY



6

## PRIME MINISTER

SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER AT A PARLIAMENTARY DINNER IN  
HONOUR OF H.E. SIR KINGSTON DIBELA, GCMG, K.St.J, GOVERNOR-  
GENERAL OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA - 26 FEBRUARY 1985

YOUR EXCELLENCY, MEMBERS OF THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS,  
HONOURABLE MEMBERS.

I AM PLEASED TO WELCOME YOUR EXCELLENCY TO AUSTRALIA, ON  
BEHALF OF ALL THE PARLIAMENTARIANS HERE AND ON BEHALF OF  
ALL AUSTRALIANS. I DO SO IN THE SURE KNOWLEDGE THAT  
PAPUA NEW GUINEA HAS A SPECIAL PLACE IN THE HEARTS OF  
ALL AUSTRALIANS. THE UNFORCED AND UNDIVIDED AFFECTION  
WHICH AUSTRALIANS AND PAPUA NEW GUINEANS HAVE MAINTAINED  
FOR EACH OTHER IS THE SUREST DEMONSTRATION OF THE  
SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES.

VISITS SUCH AS YOURS CONSOLIDATE AND CONFIRM WHAT WE ALL  
KNOW TO BE TRUE : THAT RELATIONS BETWEEN AUSTRALIA AND  
PAPUA NEW GUINEA ARE UNIQUELY CLOSE AND UNIQUELY FIRM.

IT IS EASY TO TAKE FOR GRANTED THE POSITIVE ASPECTS OF  
THE RELATIONSHIP. BUT WE SHOULD NOT FORGET THAT  
DEALINGS BETWEEN AUSTRALIA AND PAPUA NEW GUINEA  
CONSTITUTE AN IMPORTANT AND RARE SUCCESS STORY.

THE BASIS FOR THAT RELATIONSHIP REMAINS THE WAY IN WHICH DE-COLONISATION WAS HANDLED. WE WERE ALL PROUD AT THE TIME OF THE WAY THAT PROCESS WAS CARRIED OUT - SMOOTHLY, EFFICIENTLY, QUICKLY AND PEACEFULLY. WE CAN STILL BE PROUD.

WE IN THE LABOR PARTY REGARD OUR OWN ROLE IN THE PROCESS AS ONE OF OUR MAJOR HISTORICAL ACHIEVEMENTS. THE ROLE OF THE COALITION PARTIES IN THAT SAME PROCESS, PARTICULARLY TOWARDS THE END OF THE COLONIAL PERIOD, ALSO BROUGHT GREAT CREDIT ON AUSTRALIA.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA'S MOVEMENT TOWARDS INDEPENDENCE WAS ACHIEVED WITHOUT VIOLENCE, WITHOUT RECRIMINATIONS, WITHOUT INSTABILITY. SINCE INDEPENDENCE PAPUA NEW GUINEA AND AUSTRALIA HAVE BEEN FORMALLY SEPARATED BUT HAVE CONTINUED TO MOVE TOGETHER. WE DO NOT ALWAYS AGREE, BUT WE ALWAYS RESPECT AND TRUST EACH OTHER. BOTH COUNTRIES RECOGNISE THAT THE OTHER IS A PARTNER OF PERMANENT IMPORTANCE. WE HAVE NO INTENTION OF ALLOWING ANY ASPECT OF THAT SITUATION TO CHANGE.

ORGANISING OUR RELATIONSHIP HAS ENTAILED A LOT OF GIVE AND TAKE ON BOTH SIDES. MUTUAL RESPECT HAS MADE THOSE PRAGMATIC ADJUSTMENTS EASY TO HANDLE. WE WILL CONTINUE TO SHARE MANY INTERESTS IN OUR NEIGHBOURHOOD.

WE WILL CONTINUE TO DEVELOP THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC DIMENSIONS OF OUR RELATIONSHIP. WE WILL CONTINUE TO WORK TOGETHER IN MEETINGS OF COMMONWEALTH COUNTRIES AND THE SOUTH PACIFIC FORUM.

OUR RELATIONSHIP IS NOT SIMPLY A MATTER OF SENTIMENT AND TRADITION - ALTHOUGH THE MUTUAL SENTIMENTS ARE NATURAL AND WARM, AND THE TRADITIONS BINDING US TOGETHER ARE LONG AND HONOURABLE. MY FIRST OVERSEAS VISIT AS PRIME MINISTER WAS TO PAPUA NEW GUINEA. THAT WAS A NATURAL AND FITTING ORDERING OF PRIORITIES. I RETURNED TO PORT MORESBY LAST AUGUST TO ATTEND A REGIONAL COMMONWEALTH MEETING AND TO SHARE IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA'S CELEBRATIONS FOR THE OPENING OF THE NEW PARLIAMENT BUILDING. I WILL BE BACK AGAIN. IN THE MEANTIME MR HAYDEN HAS ONLY RECENTLY COMPLETED ANOTHER SIGNIFICANT VISIT AIMED AT FURTHER BROADENING AND DEEPENING THE LINKS BETWEEN US.

AS YOU KNOW, MR HAYDEN VISITED PAPUA NEW GUINEA PRINCIPALLY TO RATIFY THE TORRES STRAIT TREATY. I REFER SPECIFICALLY TO THAT TREATY BECAUSE IT REPRESENTS A LANDMARK IN OUR RELATIONS. THE TREATY HAS BEEN DRAFTED LABORIOUSLY AND CAREFULLY. IT CONSTITUTES A PRACTICAL RESOLUTION OF COMPLICATED AND CONTENTIOUS ISSUES. IT PROVIDES APPROPRIATE RE-ASSURANCES FOR THE TRADITIONAL INHABITANTS OF THE TORRES STRAIT ISLANDS.

BOTH GOVERNMENTS HAVE INDICATED THEIR DETERMINATION TO FULFIL ALL THEIR OBLIGATIONS TO THE ISLANDERS. MORE GENERALLY, BOTH COUNTRIES HAVE SHOWN THEIR ABILITY AND THEIR INTENTION TO WORK THROUGH A SET OF DIFFICULT QUESTIONS, TO DEAL HARMONIOUSLY AND EFFECTIVELY WITH EACH OTHER, AND TO STRENGTHEN OUR RELATIONSHIP BY DOING SO. THAT IS A MODEL WHICH WE SHOULD NOT AND WILL NOT FORGET.

OUR RELATIONSHIP HAS NOT STOOD STILL. WE HAVE GONE WELL PAST DE-COLONISATION. MOREOVER WE IN AUSTRALIA HAVE NEVER BEEN INTERESTED IN NEO-COLONIALISM. THOSE ASPECTS OF AUSTRALIAN EXPERIENCE WHICH HAVE FOUND A RELEVANCE IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA HAVE BEEN APLIED BECAUSE THE PAPUA NEW GUINEA GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE FOUND THEM TO BE FITTING - NOT BECAUSE AUSTRALIA WANTED TO IMPOSE THEM.

NOR WILL AUSTRALIA INTRUDE INTO AREAS PROPERLY THE RESPONSIBILITY OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA. THE IRIAN JAYA BORDER ISSUE, FOR EXAMPLE, IS ONE TO BE MANAGED BETWEEN PAPUA NEW GUINEA AND INDONESIA.

I WISH TO REFER TO TWO SPECIFIC FACETS OF OUR SHARED EXPERIENCE IN WHICH YOU, YOUR EXCELLENCY, HAVE PLAYED A PARTICULAR ROLE. THE FIRST IS THE WESTMINSTER SYSTEM, FROM WHICH WE BOTH DRAW HEAVILY. YOU KNOW THAT SYSTEM WELL AS A FORMER SPEAKER OF YOUR PARLIAMENT.

BOTH AUSTRALIA AND PAPUA NEW GUINEA HAVE ADAPTED THE SYSTEM AS DEVELOPED AT WESTMINSTER ITSELF. BUT BOTH OF US HAVE ALSO FOUND THAT SYSTEM TO BE A BUTTRESS FOR THE DEMOCRATIC VALUES AND HABITS WHICH WE SHARE, AND A SAFEGUARD FOR THE LIBERTIES WE CHERISH.

THE SECOND ASPECT OF SHARED EXPERIENCE CONCERNS EDUCATION, A FIELD WITH WHICH YOU ARE MOST FAMILIAR FROM YOUR YEARS OF WORK AS A TEACHER. A LOT OF AUSTRALIAN TEACHERS HAVE IN THE PAST LIVED AND WORKED IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA. A LOT OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA TEACHERS HAVE RECEIVED SOME OF THEIR SECONDARY AND TERTIARY EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA.

THESE PEOPLE TO PEOPLE LINKS ARE VITAL AND MUST CONTINUE. OUR EDUCATION SYSTEMS AND PRIORITIES WILL NECESSARILY DIVERGE SOMEWHAT. BUT WE BOTH KNOW THAT EDUCATION - IN AUSTRALIA AS IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA - IS FUNDAMENTAL FOR NATION BUILDING. WE BOTH KNOW THAT EDUCATION SYSTEMS MUST TEACH ACCURATELY AND THOROUGHLY WHAT OUR NATIONS' PLACE IN THE WORLD MEANS AND HOW WE MIGHT BOTH WORK WITH EACH OTHER.

THAT MEANS GIVING A PARTICULAR PRIORITY TO TEACHING HOW OUR TWO COUNTRIES HAVE DEALT WITH EACH OTHER. THIS, I BELIEVE, IS AN IMPORTANT WAY OF CONTINUING AND CONFIRMING THE TIES BETWEEN US.

I COULD GO ON TALKING ABOUT OUR CRUCIAL AID  
RELATIONSHIP, OUR PRACTICAL NETWORKS OF DEFENCE  
CO-OPERATION, OUR IMPORTANT ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIP, OUR  
EXCHANGES IN MOST FIELDS OF GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION;  
THAT GROUND WOULD BE FAMILIAR TO YOU. I WOULD RATHER  
CONCLUDE, HOWEVER BY REITERATING A POINT I MADE EARLIER,  
THAT WE SHOULD NOT TAKE THE WARMTH AND DEPTH OF OUR  
RELATIONSHIP FOR GRANTED. THE RELATIONSHIP REFLECTS  
WELL ON BOTH COUNTRIES AND PROMISES BOTH OF US A GREAT  
DEAL.

I HOPE AND EXPECT THAT YOUR VISIT, YOUR EXCELLENCY, WILL  
BE NOT ONLY A CAUSE FOR RE-AFFIRMATION OF OUR TIES BUT A  
SPUR TO FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF OUR RELATIONS.

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