



## PRIME MINISTER

TRANSCRIPT OF NEWS CONFERENCE, SHANGRI-LA HOTEL, KUALA LUMPUR, 22 OCTOBER 1989

E & O E - PROOF ONLY

JOURNALIST: Mr Hawke, what's your response to the CHOGM declaration on South Africa? Are you happy with the way it worked out?

PM: Yes, the declaration has embraced the five point plan that I proposed at the meeting here, it's been embraced. I think we now have a basis on which the Commonwealth, we can proceed to build upon the combination of external and internal pressures that have developed to give some evidence now of change, the beginnings of change in South Africa.

JOURNALIST: The fact that Margaret Thatcher, the leader of the biggest and most influential nation, wouldn't support the thrust of your package, doesn't that in a very significant way damage its effectiveness?

PM: No, I don't believe so. Of course if you read the declaration you'll find that what the British Government has done is to associate themselves with most of the declaration but particular paragraphs in which they indicate they can't accept. But significantly there's no dissent from the British Government on that important part of the declaration which calls on the rest of the world to apply the existing sanctions that are being applied. Now I regard that as a very significant development.

JOURNALIST: ... is it a softening of the line?

PM: By the British?

JOURNALIST: Yes.

PM: Well it's not for me to insert what the British Government are doing in terms of hardening or softening. I mean you would need those questions of Mrs Thatcher. But I don't want to be carping about Mrs Thatcher because I think she found herself in a difficult position in that the rest of the Commonwealth countries have a unanimous position, she has differences of emphasis in regard to certain matters,

(PM cont) including particularly the force of sanctions. But I think that Mrs Thatcher attempted to be as cooperative as she could be given the position that she's got and certainly with the statement that has come out of Langkawi we do have a position I think of very considerable strength.

JOURNALIST: Has Mrs Thatcher finally acknowledged that sanctions are doing the job?

PM: Well it's very difficult for anyone, whether it's Mrs Thatcher or not, to take any other position when the leading officials within South Africa, both of Government, the Minister for Finance and the late Governor of the Reserve Bank have themselves asserted two things that I said at the press conference here before, the two things that are important. One, that sanctions are having a very significant effect of constraint upon economic growth in South Africa; and secondly, associated with that acknowledgement, the statement that those things will continue until such time as they get their political act right. Now when leading South African figures are saying that, it doesn't come easily for anyone else to deny those facts.

JOURNALIST: Is there an assumption in the statement that if South Africa doesn't do anything in the next six months that the Commonwealth will impose some sort of tougher sanctions?

PM: I think you read it for what it says. That is that I think as a Commonwealth we have been proper in acknowledging that with the election of President de Klerk there has been some indications of change. We have not been taken in by those changes to say that the end of apartheid is in sight but we have, I think, responsibly said that it makes sense to give some period of time to see whether those embryonic changes are fleshed out into more significant moves. That's why I said in my intervention here before we left Kuala Lumpur that it seemed to me that it would be appropriate for the Committee of Foreign Minister to meet about April. That position has been embraced within the Langkawi declaration on South Africa. Now that will mean that in that period of six months we can see whether, as I put it before, the executive decisions are taken which are capable of being taken before the Parliament meets. Now we're taking, as it were, a positive and optimistic view that some of these changes will take place and so that if that were the case you wouldn't need to be considering whether in fact you can put more pressure on. I think the Commonwealth has expressed the view that it's going to position itself to consider that possibility if it's necessary and speaking for myself - and I guess my opinion is significant in that it's our proposals that have formed the foundation of the

(PM cont) Commonwealth's statement on South Africa - I think that it is important that we give an indication of hope and take a positive approach that these changes will occur. Let me say this: that you would appreciate that I've had now lengthy discussions here and at the Retreat with the leaders of the frontline African States and I can say that it is their hope too that these positive changes that we've already seen will grow and develop so that there is no need to consider a strengthening of action. Indeed, it's the hope of all of us that we could reach a position where sanctions could be eased because you'll recall the language I've used that we've never wanted sanctions for the sake of sanctions, the phrase I have used, and which has recommended itself to my colleagues in the Commonwealth is that sanctions are to bring South Africa not to it's knees but to the negotiating table.

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister, if can I just ask one question. Mrs Thatcher says that the impact of sanctions has not influenced the policies of the South African regime. If it hasn't been sanctions, what's it been?

PM: I don't accept that analysis. Obviously from what I've said before and when you have the statement of de Plessis, the Finance Minister and de Kock, the late Governor of the Reserve Bank, saying that there must be changes because of the economic pressures and when you see on the eve of the Commonwealth meeting the release of these prisoners, then it, in my respectful observation, it defies any logic to say that sanctions haven't had their effect, they obviously have.

JOURNALIST: Mr Hawke, they've endorsed your proposal for an independent agency to monitor financial links and Australia's putting up some money. Could you say how much and what form that agency will take?

PM: No, I can't say how much we will put up. The amount that Australia ... I don't think we'll have to put it all up ... there will be support from others. But we have taken the lead in this area of financial sanctions. As you'll appreciate it's appropriate that we should give a lead, we will, and what we will now have is further discussions with our own people and others in the Commonwealth to see what particular institution that exists within the Commonwealth and in an appropriate centre where there is access to relevant lines of financial information, where it will be best situated. We don't have any - because it's our idea - we're not saying where it should be. I would want it to be in a place where it can be most effective.

JOURNALIST: Mr Hawke, you've also said that it's a significant development that Mrs Thatcher is at last recognising existing sanctions. Why do you think she's made this?

PM: Look I've not at any stage tried to put myself in the mind of and to speak for Mrs Thatcher, it would be presumptuous of me to do that. To the extent that it's appropriate for me to make some observations about the effect of anything she's said or done, I think that that's fair enough. But I don't want to put myself in Margaret Thatcher's mind. I think if you've got questions as to what she's thinking it's appropriate if you can to ask her.

JOURNALIST: Did Mrs Thatcher give any indication to the Commonwealth leaders today that she'd be issuing her own statement on South Africa which she's done tonight?

PM: No, there was no indication that that would be done. But I don't think she had any obligation to -

JOURNALIST: Do you think this weakens the force of the unanimous ...?

PM: No, not at all. I mean if you have a position where in the document that was accepted at Langkawi, if there is an indication in that that the British Government reserves its position on certain of the paragraphs as is done, well that's fair enough that the Leader of the British Government should indicate their position in that respect. And no-one can argue with that.

JOURNALIST: ... the environmental statement, there's a paragraph in there that says that they don't want to tie aid and trade to environmental conditions. Where does this leave Australia's environmental statement?

PM: In no different position from where we are. Let me just quote you the actual wording of the statement on that, if I could just see it, I mean I don't want to get in your way in all. But it says that we've agreed to strengthen and support the development of international funding mechanisms and appropriate decision making procedures to respond to environmental protection needs which will include assisting developing countries to obtain access to and transfer of needed environmental technologies and which would take account of proposals for international environmental protection funds. So that point deals with the concept of general assistance. But then specifically on the question of the relationship between development and environmental concerns, specifically this is what it has to say and there's

(PM cont) two parts to it which you need to understand to respond to your question: "sustainable development implies the incorporation of environmental concerns into economic planning and policies." I mean there's the recognition of the relationship between sustainable development and the incorporation of environmental concerns. But they then say: "environmental concerns should not be used to introduce a new form of conditionality in aid and development and financing." Now we're in a position where in the past we have in our developmental programs incorporated our concern for environmental issues. So what we've done in the past is totally consistent with what's contained in the declaration.

JOURNALIST: Mr Hawke, on the developments on Antarctica over the weekend, the release from Paris called it a Land of Science rather than a World Wilderness Park. Is there any significance in that?

PM: Get your question right. It combined the two. It referred to Wilderness - Land of Science.

JOURNALIST: inaudible

PM: Well, you want to get your information right.

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister, was there any discussion at the Retreat about Cambodia and the impending problems there? Do you think it's an issue the Commonwealth should deal with?

PM: No, not specifically. You'll recall that the world political situation was the subject of the first day's discussion here in KL and it didn't specifically come up in the two major Retreat sessions, which were predominantly concerned with the environment, with South Africa and with the role of the Commonwealth in examining the question of looking to the next decade, as it were - what are the emphases that the Commonwealth will need to take into account and in turn what may that involve for the actual shaping and staffing and servicing by the Secretariat. Those were the major issues that were discussed up there. But of course one of the great virtues of the Retreat is that it enables a lot of informal discussion and I can say that Cambodia was one of the matters that I did discuss with some of the leaders there.

JOURNALIST: Do you expect Hong Kong to be raised in the next couple of days, Mr Hawke?

PM: Well again, in the first day's discussion on the world political scene, Hong Kong was mentioned and again, I've had some bilateral discussions on that with Mrs Thatcher. Whether that will come up again now, I doubt it. This is the sort of thing that you're able to discuss very usefully -

JOURNALIST: Are you able to say what you discussed with her?

PM: Just briefly to say that we recognise the pressures that have been created for Hong Kong by the events of June 4 and the need for confidence to be given to Hong Kong. And that's a position that we both share.

JOURNALIST: Did Mr Namaliu make any specific requests of you with respect to the situation in Bougainville?

PM: No, I'm having an extensive bilateral with him in the morning. I'm meeting with him at 7.30 in the morning.

JOURNALIST: Sonny Ramphal said it was the clearest and strongest statement on South Africa that has ever come from the Commonwealth. Do you agree with that?

PM: I suppose, summoning all the modesty I can, I think that's not a bad statement.

JOURNALIST: What happened in the big showdown on the golf?

PM: I thought you were never going to ask.

JOURNALIST: inaudible

PM: No, no wait a minute, wait a minute. A very important question has been asked here, what happened in the golf. Australia beat New Zealand.

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