



PRIME MINISTER

TRANSCRIPT OF NEWS CONFERENCE, RAAF FLIGHT TO TURKEY, 22
APRIL 1990

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JOURNALIST: ... the Gallipoli book in particular that has struck you?

PM: I think the courage of the men involved and their mateship. We pride ourselves as Australians properly, I think, on the concept of mateship and it was there at Anzac Cove that that concept was most dramatically and effectively crystalised, in my judgement. There's no doubt about the, their courage too against overwhelming odds. Very interesting. If you read the background, Kitchener who was, Lord Kitchener who was against the concept at the beginning, said that if it were to be undertaken it would need a force of at least 200,000 troops. In the end there were only about 70,000. So you can see that they were given mission impossible almost from the beginning. Much of the planning was unbelievably inept and, against all those odds, as I say, the courage and the commitment and the mateship and the dedication to one another of the Australians is the thing that shone through.

JOURNALIST: You had a chance to talk to some of the veterans before they left Sydney last week. What came though in terms of their expectations ...

PM: A number of things, great deal of emotions among them. I think again more than anything the thought that they were going to be back there with their mates. There were about eight and a half thousand, and I say about because there is no absolute certainty about the numbers killed, but the Australian War Memorial talks in terms of about 8,700 and most of those, of course, are there in their graves in the about 26 cemeteries that are dotted around on the Peninsula and the thought that these men being back there with their mates, I think, was something that was uppermost in their mind because they realise how fortunate they were, relatively, of course, to escape. Many of these men were themselves very seriously wounded and will carry that affliction for the rest of their life and I think they think of the supreme sacrifice made by their mates that are still there and I think the thought of going back to be with them is the thing more than anything, is uppermost in their mind.

JOURNALIST: By the time this is over it will have cost perhaps millions of dollars. Was that ever a consideration when you were thinking of doing this trip?

PM: No. Let's understand that the concept arose from the representatives of the men themselves. Bill Hall, the representative of the World War I veterans raised the matter back in 1988 - raised it with Kim Beazley. Kim Beazley spoke to me and I immediately said yes, this seemed a good idea. I think you can't measure these things in terms of money. The fact is that this will be the last significant occasion to which these veterans will be able to go on this 75th anniversary. And what they embodied, represented, not only in terms of Gallipoli, but in terms of the sacrifice of Australian servicemen and women throughout the century is something which has given us the opportunity to enjoy our life today and the amount of money that's involved is not something to be measured against all those things.

JOURNALIST: Mr Hawke, obviously the Anzac Day ceremony is at the centrepiece of the visit, but bilateral discussions with the Turkish Government, how important are they?

PM: Well, they will be important, but you rightly say they are very much a subsidiary to our visit. I'll have the opportunity of talking with the Prime Minister and the President and those discussions will cover our bilateral relations. We have trade with them, two-way trade of over \$100 million per annum. I think there are significant opportunities for increasing Australian exports to Turkey in the field of coal and iron ore. Also they have a very big project there, in a way is similar to the concept of the Snowy Mountains Scheme which is involving 13 different centres in something like ten percent of the land area of Turkey, to develop power and irrigation. And I think we have the expertise to be of assistance there, so I'll want to be talking about that. I'll also obviously be wanting to get impressions from them about developments in the Soviet Union. They are so close to Azerbaijan and have historically close links with the Soviet Union in regard to that area in particular. Also they have been having problems with Bulgaria and I'll be ... be wanting to get their feel of developments in Eastern Europe. Obviously, also, we are very much concerned about the stalemate between Turkey and Greece in regard to Cyprus, I want to talk to them about that.

JOURNALIST: (inaudible)

PM: Yes I will.

JOURNALIST: (inaudible)

PM: Not exclusively, but including the Kurds.

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