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PRIME MINISTER

PARTIAL TRANSCRIPT OF NEWS CONFERENCE ON DEPARTURE FROM ANKARA, TURKEY, 24 APRIL 1990

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JOURNALIST: With only hours to go till the anniversary landing or commemorating landing at Gallipoli, have you got any further thoughts than those you've expressed to the media and to the Australian public ...

PM: Well, except to say that now that I have been in Turkey for a day or so I am further reinforced in the admiration I have for the way in which the Turkish authorities have gone out of their way to ensure that this Australian pilgrimage will be assisted in every possible way. It is quite clear that our Turkish friends remember with the same sort of admiration as we do, the valour, the heroism, the commitment of the men from both sides who fought on Gallipoli 75 years ago. And as I had the opportunity of pointing out in my speech last night, it is something of a paradox, if you like, that the warm relations between our two countries at the end of this century are founded in that conflict of 75 years ago and I think we remember with now a particular sense of appreciation the way in which, after the end of those hostilities, in the words of Kemal Ataturk, the Australian men who died became regarded as the sons of Turkey as their remains rested in the soil of Turkey. These have been demonstrated to us to be much more than mere words. They do reflect a deep feeling of the Turkish people and they provide a bond between our two countries which is, is unique.

JOURNALIST: Can I ask just one more question which is do you find it a paradox and an irony that you've offered ... and tribute to the Turkish treatment to our veterans that have returned, given the experience 75 years ago?

PM: It's the nature of war. I believe that, by definition, if two countries ... are at war, they believe in their cause and they are going to fight with total commitment to achieve their ends and that will mean throwing everything that each side has at the other and that involves no compromise. But if you regard those against whom you've fought as having been both capable and of having fought with integrity, then once that war is over, then the interests of the nations concerned and the people of those nations is going to be best served by trying to work in the future for cooperation

so that war will no longer be necessary. I think that we have made it quite clear as we are prepared to come to you on this pilgrimage, that we haven't come to glorify war and nor would we ever seek to do that. What we are doing is to pay homage to those who were prepared to pay and indeed so many of whom did pay, the supreme sacrifice, so that succeeding generations would have the opportunity of living in peace and that's the importance of this visit because those men on both sides died for what they believed to be right and, in a sense, I think they fought in the hope that in the future, war would not be necessary. Of course the events of the generation after 1915 proved that that hope was, at that time, in vain. But I think now there is an increasing realisation around the world that war is even more unthinkable now than it was then, but the instruments of destruction are such that you could never limit war to those immediately involved. But war today carries with it the possibility of the annihilation of mankind as we know it from the planet, so when we think about these battles of the past I think we remember even more fully than perhaps ever before the futility of war. And it's been very reassuring to us in our discussions with our friends here in Turkey to understand that their thinking is the same as ours in that respect.

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