



PRIME MINISTER

**TRANSCRIPT OF THE PRIME MINISTER, THE HON P.J. KEATING MP
DOORSTOP, HMY BRITANNIA, LIMASSOL, FRIDAY, 22 OCTOBER 1993**

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J: Was it a friendly meeting?

PM: I've never had anything but the most friendly and cordial meetings with the Queen ever. As you know I hold her in the highest regard and I always enjoy her company as we all had the privilege of enjoying her last night.

J: What did you make of her speech last night?

PM: I thought it was an entertaining speech, but it also shows I think, that Her Majesty is herself making her own commentary on the changes which have occurred in the Commonwealth in the last 40 years, as she did last night. And also making everyone aware that she understands it is a continuing dynamic and that the change she has seen is only evidence of the fact that there will be more change and that she understands and can accommodate those changes.

J: Do you see it as a public affirmation of your Balmoral discussions?

PM: I thought in a sense she was as she authorised me to say there, she herself then was saying last night something similar. That is, countries have constitutional discussions, she wished the nation the best in those debates - taking no particular side in them and saying that the monarchy has in respect of these things, the Constitutional Monarchy has a certain position, entirely certain of its position and that countries should in their own interests go and have these debates.

J: Did those remarks give you encouragement for heading Australia towards a republic?

PM: It is not a matter of any encouragement, it is the Queen as Constitutional Monarch defining what she sees as changes or possible changes and drawing on the evidence of change over the 40 years of her realm. As she was saying, one wouldn't have believed in 1955 or 1953 for instance that a CHOGM meeting would be here for instance - in Cyprus. Or she said that Fiji wouldn't be here. She was making obvious the fact that a lot of changes have already occurred and some may still occur, that she understands these things.

J: Prime Minister, do you get the feeling that she is comfortable with that process of change?

PM: I'm not here to reveal any context of any discussion I have had with the Queen, but to say that I think Her Majesty understands these historical changes probably better than any of us talking here at the moment.

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