



PRIME MINISTER

**TRANSCRIPT OF THE PRIME MINISTER, THE HON P J KEATING MP
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PM: Can I just begin by saying that the signing of this agreement with Indonesia is a very satisfying moment for me. What it does is give full expression to the kind of relationship I believe we should have always had with Indonesia and it is a declaration of trust and cooperation on both of our parts where we are saying that the security of the region is a common interest between the two of us. They are saying the environment and security of our continent is of interest to them as we are saying the strategic environment of their archipelago are of interest to us.

We were here, of course, at the founding of this state. We were the first country to support the Indonesian people against the Dutch in the post war decolonising period and we have much of substance and durability in this relationship. And, I think, the weight of it is given evidence by the fact that this is the most powerful, if you like in government terms, delegation to have visited a country - the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister, the Foreign Minister and the Minister for Defence.

So, you might remember that during the middle of 1991 I gave an interview during the then leadership challenge saying that one of the things I wanted to do was to see a proper relationship with Indonesia and this sets up that structure within the broader architecture of the Asia-Pacific under the aegis of APEC.

In these two ways we have given more substance to this relationship and declared more obviously our trust in it than we have ever done before.

J: Prime Minister, there has been another demonstration in Australia today on the East Timor issue, what can you do or say to bring those people on board?

PM: It is, I think, so obvious that the treaty for security is about maintaining a peaceful environment in the region. You have got this government seeking now to start the long process of the destocking of the nuclear arsenals. We have been responsible in a large part for a convention ridding the world of a whole treaty of weapons, of chemical weapons. The government's support for peace in Cambodia, what we have done in the region with APEC and what we are doing here is all about peace and security. So, why people would demonstrate about peace and security is beyond me and when they wish to focus on Timor, the only positive way, I think, Timor can be approached as an issue is in a relationship with this substance. So, I just think they have to understand where the government is coming from in terms of peace and security generally and Indonesia in particular.

J: Do you think you could have won their support if you had made this a more public process ?

PM: Well, if there had been a more public process there probably wouldn't have been a treaty.

J: Doesn't that prove a point of perhaps needing greater public support for this treaty?

PM: No, this treaty was negotiated privately within the due processes of government, of the Cabinet and in the authority given to the Parliament and to its majority, the government and to its executive the Cabinet. All the appropriate protocols have been followed in the development of a treaty around sensitive issues. This wide notion that you can go out making a declaration that you want a treaty without even knowing whether the other partner has any intention of reciprocity.

J: Could you see any further such bilateral treaties with Australia and other countries in the region?

PM: Not really. This is the key one. The fact is that we have put into place in the last couple of years two key things, we have built a new political architecture in the Asia-Pacific with APEC which has North America, Japan, China, Korea and South East Asia and Australia and New Zealand and we have built a bilateral treaty of security with our nearest largest neighbour. That sort of structure Australia has never had before.

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