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PRIME MINISTER

14 March 1996

ljd/ab

TRANSCRIPT OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE MALAYSIAN PRIME MINISTER, DR MAHATHIR'S, OFFICIAL VISIT TO AUSTRALIA

E&OE.....

Ladies and gentleman I am very pleased to confirm that the Malaysian Prime Minister, Dr Mahathir, will visit Australia on the 29th of March on his way back to Kuala Lumpur from New Zealand. I issued an invitation to him shortly after being sworn in and I am particularly pleased that so early in my Prime Ministership and so early in the life of the new Government there should be a top level Head of Government, the Head of Government contact between Australia and Malaysia.

The bilateral relationship between our two countries is important to us and I look forward to my talks with Dr Mahathir to discuss not only the bilateral relationship but also other matters of mutual interest in our region and global issues of concern and interest to both of us. It is important as I stressed during the election campaign to see the election of a Coalition Government as continuing the strong relationship between Australia and the nations of our region. We are strongly committed as the new Government of Australia to building ever closer relationships with the nations of our region, including Malaysia, and the fact that so early in the life of the new Government it has been possible to arrange this visit is a matter of particular pleasure for me. It demonstrates the commitment I have and my Government has to the relationship between our two countries and the importance we attach to close relations with all the nations of our region.

Thank you.