



PRIME MINISTER

20 September 1996

**TRANSCRIPT OF THE PRIME MINISTER
THE HON JOHN HOWARD MP
ADDRESS TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF JAPAN,
MR HASHIMOTO**

E&OE.....

Thank you very much Prime Minister. I would like to thank you for the very warm and generous way in which I have been received and it has already been an opportunity for me to reaffirm the great strength and depth of the bilateral relationship between Australia and Japan.

I took the opportunity this morning to thank the Prime Minister for the way in which Japan had strongly supported Australia's desire to be part of the Asia European meeting. Japan has been very articulate and strong in support of Australia and we continue to appreciate that very much.

I also told the Prime Minister that Australia continued to strongly support Japan's desire to become a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council. We appreciate that this will take time but we have long regarded it as a natural and proper thing to occur and something that will be entirely consonant with Japan's position and role, not only economically but also politically in the world.

Both of us agreed, as the Prime Minister said, how important it was to engage China, how important it was on proper conditions that China were to become a member of the World Trade Organisation and Australia and Japan have very similar views in relation to the need to properly and appropriately engage China, not only in the World Trade Organisation, but more generally.

I also took the opportunity to say again how much I believe the joint declaration framed by the Prime Minister and President Clinton, how much that joint declaration of a few months ago has contributed enormously to the Japan/U.S relationship, but in so doing has made a very positive contribution to the stability and given a very optimistic outlook to the region as a whole.

May I say on a more personal note that I have very greatly appreciated the talks so far with the Prime Minister. The talks have been very warm, they have been very friendly, and they are to continue over lunch. May I respond very positively to the initiative of the Prime Minister in proposing a series of events to celebrate particular anniversaries in the relationship between Australia and Japan. Many of them are occurring this year and next year, and as the Prime Minister knows, the relationship between our two countries gets deeper year by year. It has gone way beyond a mere economic relationship. It is very much cultural and personal relationship as well, and I took the opportunity this morning of renewing my invitation to the Prime Minister to visit Australia next year. He will be very warmly welcomed as a very good friend of Australia and as a person who represents a country that is very important to Australia.

And in the course of our discussions I was able to say to the Prime Minister that the bilateral relationship between Australia and Japan was in absolutely excellent shape and in every respect it is a relationship that gives great pleasure and satisfaction to the Australian people.

I also said that over lunch we would talk a little about some of the changed domestic policies in Australia and I suspect we may even spend a few moments talking about election campaigns!

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