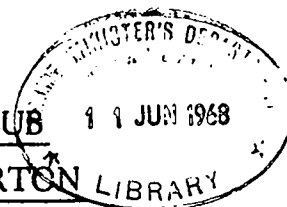


WASHINGTON

ADDRESS TO THE NATIONAL PRESS CLUB
BY THE PRIME MINISTER, MR. JOHN GORTON



28 MAY 1968

Mr. President, and Gentlemen:-

I suppose this is the most daunting audience to whom it would be possible for a politician to speak, because quite clearly, every word that is said, and particularly if it is said off the cuff--and in any case it has to be said off the cuff, because I have not got anybody to write my speeches for me, I haven't got time to do as many as I should--but every word that is said off the cuff is listened to, and interpreted; I won't go so far as to say misinterpreted, but at any rate, very, very closely examined. The other thing about it is that all of you know so much more about international and economic affairs than any speaker who came to talk to you could possibly claim to know. So there are considerable difficulties facing me.

Now, this has brought to my mind a delightful mental picture, when you talked about the sequoia, and coupled with the words "duchessing" and "arm-twisting". And I could not help but wonder what the duchess was having her arm twisted for. But I do not think either of those things in effect happened. I do not wish to talk to you for a long time.

Initially, when I first came and spoke at the reception I was given at the White House, I sketched out in short compass the feelings that we in Australia have about what the United States is doing in various parts of the world, and, by implication, what we hoped the United States would continue to do in various parts of the world. But there are one or two things that I do want to say.

I do want to say that as a representative of a small nation-- it is all right--later on I will tell you how big we are going to be in the future--but just at the moment a comparatively small nation..... I wonder if anybody has thought what the situation of comparatively small nations in the world today would be if there were not in existence a United States, with a heritage of democracy, and with a willingness to see that small nations, who otherwise might not be able by themselves, were given some shield and some guarantee that they would be able to run their own affairs in their own way. Just imagine what the situation in the world would be if there were not a great and giant country which were prepared to make those sacrifices for that end. And the end is not negligible.

For a long time, for as long as my study of history extends into the past, and indeed for as long as my vista of the future extends, there is likely to be, as there has also been, a deep division of opinion among mankind as to whether it is better for a country, any country, to have political freedom, to have Governments which are chosen by majorities and dismissed by majorities, or whether it is better to have some Government which is not so subject to dismissal, and which is a state above the individual. This is the cleavage which for so long has continued: Is the state designed to serve the individual or is the individual designed to serve the state?

Now we have seen in the past this struggle in the Second World War, when those who believed that the individual was merely something to serve the state--when those who believed that you could not have political and economic freedom, but had to submit yourself to some arbitrary authority in order to gain a loaf of bread, sought, under black fascism to have it around the world. And that kind of division of opinion still exists.

If it is true, as I believe that it is true, that in the future mankind, as a whole, and in all the nations of the world, can only reach a state of enduring peace and proper progress if it is realized that the individual must dominate the state and not the other way around, then what was done in the Second World War was something which serves the future of humanity. Now, I go further:

As we see it in Australia, this is the basic question in Vietnam. It is claimed this is a civil war. We do not see it that way. We see it as your President sees it, and as I believe your President's predecessors saw it, as another test of whether small nations are to be subdued by force, as another test of whether the state or the individual is to be the unit by which humanity progresses. And because we see it that way, we contribute. We do not contribute a great deal, but we do have Navy, Air Force, Army there. We do what we can to help, because we think that what you are doing to help the South Vietnamese is right.

I do not mean that all the people in my country feel this way, because I do not. But I do mean that the vast majority of them, the last time they had a chance to express their opinion, felt this way. And I am confident that the next time they have a chance to express their opinion, they will feel this way--though in the interregnums I have no doubt that minorities will protest, will carry banners, will get television coverage, will get press coverage, but will not represent the feelings of my own nation.

Now, let me tell you a little of my own nation--those of you who have not been there. I know there were thirty or so who recently came through--we were delighted to see them. We are a country of some 12 million people. We are a country of immense national resources which have not yet been properly or fully exploited. We are a country, as I believe, where frontiers lie for those who are willing to come and live with us, for those who are willing to provide that capital we need to help us develop into a significant power--a more significant power. Let me tell you some of the things that have happened in the last ten years in this comparatively new country.

In that time, our gross national product has risen from \$10,500 million to \$18,800 million--an eighty per cent increase. Despite the growth, the average annual increase in our gross national product has been five and a half per cent. Our fixed capital investment has doubled, from \$2,500 million a year to \$5,000 million a year. And ninety per cent of that capital investment comes from our own resources--ten per cent from abroad. We have invested twenty-six per cent of our gross national product in this kind of growth. We have increased our population over a period--give or take a year or two--from nine million to twelve million.

Well, Mr. President, I do not think that is too bad a record. And if I sound as if I am bragging, it is because I am. But it is only the beginning.

They have already discovered most of the oil, sixty per cent of the oil that we are going to require for our present needs, and there will be discovered all that is going to be required for our future needs. The mineral resources already uncovered are fabulous. And yet I believe the surface has scarcely been scratched.

I am certain that given ten, twenty years, we will be able to provide a nation of twenty million--twenty-five million people--and we will be able to give to each individual in that nation that kind of social justice which we believe must be a part of any successful country. We must see that those who are subjected to the "slings and arrows of outrageous fortune", to illness and old age, (against which they have been unable to provide) to invalidism, are properly looked after, and we will do this.

We will play our part, as we grow, along the lines I have roughly sketched, in the region in which we live, because I think that not only we, but all the wealthy countries of the world must, if they are in the future to be understood--must, if they are, in the future, to see the kind of Governments which will serve their people established in Asia, be prepared to help contribute and establish those countries in Asia for the benefit of the people there and for the benefit of ourselves and of our children and of our grandchildren.

I think that in this task that lies before us, we have been enormously helped by the United States. I believe the completion of this task will be brought the more quickly to fruition by the continued help of the United States in the area--not the United States alone but by the United States, with us, and such others as will join in that area in the economic development, the raising of the living standards of the Asian people, the raising, therefore, of the requirements, the material requirements of the Asian people, and the protection of what I began to talk about as political requirements, but will finish talking about as spiritual requirements. Because in fact, that is what political freedom means--it means that economic freedom must be provided through political freedom, but it also means that the innate desire of every individual to develop to the top of his bent, to the best of his capacity, in whichever way he wants to go, must be encouraged and permitted, subject only to his not exploiting those others among whom he lives.

Well, Sir, you have got a lot of questions set down there, and perhaps I have talked long enough. But I did want to let you know just the gratitude we feel to the United States, just the certainty of development in the future we feel for ourselves. And I think there is almost no Australian and no Australian leader who would not say to you, even if he is in a different party--and different parties are not much good--but if he is in a different party, he would at least join with me in this, to say we are going to grow, we are going to try to provide an example of a nation along the lines I have indicated to you. We are already on the way. I do not know where the end of that way will be, but I do know this--that a nation's reach must exceed its grasp, or what is a future for. And our reach is pretty great, I think.

I thank you.

President Cromley: Mr. Prime Minister, please tell us what you can about the results of your talks with the President and his advisers.

Prime Minister: I would be delighted to, Mr. Secretary. We had some most interesting talks on a whole variety of subjects. But of course since they were private talks, it is difficult to say any more than that, or they would cease to be private talks.

Q. It has been reported, Mr. Prime Minister, that you envisage an Israeli style defence posture for Australia in the future, relying on the ability to launch punitive forays to discourage aggression. Is this so?

PM. This was never a statement made by me publicly. This was a statement attributed to me by interpreters of what had been said at a private meeting. And I cannot discuss or disclose what was said at a private meeting--that is a Party meeting. But I would be prepared to say this--that we, in Australia, when I talk of an Israeli-type capacity for defence, mean a citizen army, properly armed, properly equipped, and ready to be able to go at a moment's notice into action, just as the Israelis were able to go at a moment's notice into action. This does not necessarily mean that such an army is to be used only in Australia, because we have treaty commitments with the United States, and we regard those as our greatest shield. But it does mean that I would like to see allied with mobility of forces, spearheads able to be used immediately, and a build-up of that kind of citizen military force which means that for a large part of the year an individual carries out whatever his occupation may be, but is available for call-up, is trained for part of the time each year, and is properly armed and equipped should an emergency ever arise.

Q. Mr. Prime Minister, what will Australia do to bolster Malaysia-Singapore defence after Britain leaves?

PM. Mr. President, that is a matter which is to be discussed on 10 June at the Five Power Meeting to be held in Kuala Lumpur, between Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia and Singapore. Until that Five Power Meeting has been held, and indeed quite possibly this first Five Power Meeting may only lead to future discussions amongst the same powers--but until those matters have been hammered out, a precise answer to what I take to be a question of defence rather than economic help and other help just simply could not be given. It is on 10 June that talks begin to see what all the various countries concerned in the region are prepared or able or willing to do.

Q. Mr. Prime Minister, you proscribed defence, but indicate you leave open economic. Would you care to discuss that.

PM. Well, we already provide considerable economic assistance to the area, and not only to Malaysia and Singapore, but to the area which includes Indonesia, our nearest neighbour, and our most populous neighbour. Through the Colombo Plan, a considerable amount is provided. A great deal of technical and scientific training and training in public administration is given in our own universities. We have in Australia some 10,000 Asian students at the moment--not all from Colombo Plan. But we have the equivalent of one complete Australian university devoted to training Asian administrators, Asian doctors, whatever it might be. We of course will continue to do that. I think the United Nations or somebody in the United Nations has suggested that all countries ought to give one per cent of their gross national product--not all countries--that a number of countries ought to give one per cent of their gross national product to a lot of other countries. We do not see any particular point in picking out a specific figure like that. But we are, per head, I think, from memory, something like the third ranking country in the world in the provision of foreign aid of various kinds.

- Q. Mr. Prime Minister, with Emerson, Roche, and Newcombe, all professionals now, is Australia prepared to surrender the Davis Cup to the United States?
- PM. Well Mr. President, can you tell me when a tennis player is an amateur and when he is a professional, and when you can, I will answer that question!
- Q. With the United States having second thoughts about the F-111 aircraft, is Australia considering cancelling its purchase rather than to be saddled with an inferior machine?
- PM. Now, Mr. President, I would hate to get into an intercompany argument about the capacities of any particular aircraft. Whoever wrote that question states that this is an inferior machine. On the other hand, there does seem to be quite a body of opinion that it is an extremely good machine indeed. I understand that at this stage of development, the F-111 has had rather fewer accidents than the Phantom had at the same stage of development. This at least is what I am told. And the specific answer to the first part of your question, Sir, is no--we have contracted to buy F-111 aircraft. We have a team over here now seeing whether there are, as with most developing aircraft, some bugs that need to be ironed out. When they are ironed out to the satisfaction of our own team, then we would propose to continue with the purchases that we have already undertaken to make.
- Q. Mr. Prime Minister, do you think the peace talks in Paris should include representatives from South Vietnam?
- PM. I cannot answer for South Vietnam, and I would not propose to. But as far as my own country is concerned, at this stage of the peace talks in Paris, which I imagine are really talks to see whether there is a base for any peace talks--we see at this stage no requirement for Australian participation. We do have there an External Affairs representative--that is a State Department representative using your terms--and he is in close consultation with Mr. Harriman and Mr. Vance. But this does not seem to me to be the sort of exercise where a lot of people sit around a table--it has not reached anywhere near that point--to work out an old-fashioned Versailles Peace Treaty. Rather it is a circumstance where the United States' representatives, the North Vietnamese representatives are having discussions. We have the opportunity to express our views to the United States' representatives as various aspects of those discussions arise. That is all we wish. And I cannot speak for South Vietnam.
- Q. Mr. Prime Minister, do you endorse Prime Minister Holt's position of "All the way with LBJ". Are you all the way with LBJ, another questioner asks?
- PM. Two of them. Let me perhaps answer it in this way as in a sense I answered it when I first came. We think that the United States has in its history so far done more than any other country to protect the rights of small nations and the liberties of the individual. We have treaty obligations under the ANZUS pact with the United States. We form our own judgments and make our own policies on aspects of foreign affairs as they may arise in the future. But I think it likely, on past example, that the objects of the United States would be likely to be the same objects as those of the Australian people. And that, I think, is what I will say on that.

Q. Do you plan to visit Vietnam and other Asian countries this year?

PM. Yes, Sir, I will be arriving back in Australia on 1 June, and leaving--if my memory serves me right--on 5 June for Vietnam, and from Vietnam to Malaya, Singapore and Indonesia. And I ought to make it clear that the only reason that the other Asian countries are not included is because there just are not enough hours in the day or days in the month to make this possible when there are also local political requirements. They will come later.

Q. Could Australia's prosperity survive a recession in Japan--that is, is the Australian economy now too reliant on exports of ore?

PM. I think if there were a serious recession in Japan, that it would have some effect on the purchases of our iron ore. But the Australian prosperity I think would still survive. It is now so much more broadly based than it used to be. Certainly Japan in many ways is one of our best customers. The United States is our third best customer. We can even survive a recession in the United States. But I think neither one of those possibilities is likely.

Q. In the interests of promoting tourism to Australia and the South Pacific, do you contemplate modifying the ban against air charters to Australia?

PM. Look, this frankly I do not know. I would have to talk to my Minister for Civil Aviation about that, and get all the pros and cons of it. I will write you a letter.

Q. How do you feel about reports that New Zealand wants to become a state of Australia?

PM. Well, I feel they are inaccurate, and grossly exaggerated, like Mark Twain said about the report of his death. I have just recently been in New Zealand, and spoken to their Government, and they, I am quite sure, Sir, do not want to become a state of Australia. I do not know whether I should go any further and raise any queries as to whether Australia wants them to be a state anyway, because there are difficulties about federal governments which plague us as it is. But I do add to that that what we are arranging with New Zealand, and what New Zealand is arranging with us is closer and closer economic ties, and a kind of free market, as it were, where a factory established in New Zealand can have products in Australia entering either free of duty or with less duty than many other countries. But they are quite properly a very independent and proud nation.

Q. Is the American duty on Australian wool hurting that industry badly, and have you asked the United States to modify it?

PM. The answer to the first part of that question is, it is hurting it, and the answer to the second part of that question is yes, frequently.

Q. Mr. Prime Minister, are you in any way disturbed by the anti-Vietnam, anti-war sentiment being expressed in the United States?

PM. It is difficult for somebody at as great a distance as I am to assess the real depth of the anti-Vietnam sentiment being expressed in a country 3,000 miles away, or however many thousand miles away it is.

But we do have the same kind of expression in our own country, and it is an expression of a very small minority. My mind, Mr. President, goes to a quotation from a speech by one of your former great Presidents, Theodore Roosevelt, who said that the dangers to freedom in the sort of society that the United States has or would have do not come so much from majorities as from organized and fanatical minorities who attempt to impose their will or their wishes by other than constitutional means or the ballot box. This I think is the situation in my own country as regards those who express, violently express, anti-Vietnam sentiment. What the situation is in the United States, I don't know. There are, of course, others. I speak of people who make violent protests. There are of course others who have doubts in my own country, and no doubt in yours. There are people who see this as a civil war in my own country, as no doubt in yours. I do not agree with them. And they are not worrying in Australia because they are not in a majority in my view.

Q. Mr. Prime Minister, we have writers from all segments of industry here. How is oil prospecting going in Australia? You mentioned oil in your speech. Would you elaborate?

PM. Yes. Well, the two major finds, or the major find so far has been under the sea, between the state of Victoria, where a combination of companies--Esso, one of yours, Broken Hill Pty., one of ours-- has discovered really what looks like being, but not yet fully proved to be, very, very great oil deposits indeed. It is estimated that they have found oil on Barrow Island in Western Australia, thousands of miles away, and some other smaller fields at Moonie. already provide sixty per cent of our present oil requirements. Oil prospecting is continuing, and I believe, though there is nothing but faith behind this belief--that more and more will be found, and that we will be able to be completely independent in this field.

Q. Mr. Prime Minister, is the fact that you have an American wife a disadvantage to you in Australian politics?

PM. Mr. President, it would be quite impossible for any man in this room ever to say that a wife he had of whatever nationality was a disadvantage. But I can add to that, and say that not only is it not a disadvantage--it is in my view a great advantage, particularly since we discovered, much to her and my surprise, a year or so ago, that she is not only an American citizen, but also an Australian citizen. So we get the best of both worlds.

Q. Mr. Prime Minister, when would you say the next election will take place in Australia?

PM. The time at which the next election should take place, if the House of Representatives runs its full term, is towards the end of 1969. That is the time when it would take place, if the House of Representatives ran its full term.

Q. Someone asks--when will the Sydney Opera House be finished? Will you have that open house so we can all at least come and visit?

PM. Well, I would hope that you would all come and visit before the Sydney Opera House is completed, because the last party we had through was thoroughly enjoyable from our point of view, and I think from their point of view, and gave us extremely good publicity coverage. But

there does seem to be some argument about the precise date at which the Opera House to which you refer will be finished. Indeed, Sir, some of the more disrespectful citizens of the Commonwealth of Australia are referring to the F-111 as a flying opera house. I am not. But I think within a year or two. It is really taking shape. It will be something when it is done, and something worth coming to see. But don't wait for it--just come.

Q. Mr. Prime Minister, before the last question, we want to extend to you our certificate of appreciation awarded for meritorious service to correspondents of press, radio and television in the capitol and our traditional press club official silk necktie.

PM. Thank you very much Sir.

Q. Finally, Mr. Prime Minister--is it true that Matilda has stopped waltzing, too, in Australia, and is now doing the frug?

PM. No, Sir, that is completely untrue. Mind you--what did you call that--

Q. It is a dance.

PM. I know it is a dance. I rather think that occasionally some foreign ministers get photographed doing it. But we are quite versatile, quite versatile, and the young people and the not-so-young people certainly do whatever that last dance you mentioned was. But they have not stopped Waltzing Matilda, because Waltzing Matilda is not our national anthem--it is our national song. There have, I think, been no occasions on which Australian troops have marched to war except to the strains of Waltzing Matilda. There have, I think, been no occasions when vanguards of Australian troops entered cities, such as Bardia, and with a certain braggadocio, hauled a slouched hat to the top of a flagpole, when they did not do it to the strains of Waltzing Matilda. There won't be everybody in Australia who agrees with me on this. But my own mind goes back to a time in London during the blitz, when a few of us walked into a nightclub--because in those days we were young enough to walk into night-clubs--in Air Force uniform, Australian Air Force uniform, and as we entered the band, no doubt because it had run out of other tunes to play, suddenly struck up Waltzing Matilda, and I think that all Australians, with me, were stirred, and will continue to be stirred by this song--even though we do this other dance you mentioned in the intervals.
