



PRIME MINISTER

VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES
AND THE UNITED KINGDOM 1971.

SAN FRANCISCO

PRESS CONFERENCE GIVEN BY THE AUSTRALIAN PRIME
MINISTER, MR WILLIAM McMAHON, ON ARRIVAL

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Q Would you comment on the events in the U.N. concerning admission of Mainland China?

PM Yes I would. Our objectives - the combined objectives of Australia, the United States and Japan - were to ensure that the People's Republic of China became a member of the United Nations and held the permanent seat on the Security Council. But if we also believe in the principles of the United Nations and we know that the Government in Taiwan is in effective control of that country and represents fourteen and a half million people, including twelve million Taiwanese, we wanted them to remain a member. The U.S. and ourselves have cooperated at least over the last eighteen months to come to a common conclusion about what should be done and to work out the tactics. At one time I thought there was every prospect of being successful, but after the procedural resolution was agreed to, and by a small majority we failed in the Important Question resolution, it then became only a question of time before the People's Republic was admitted and the Taiwan Government was omitted from the United Nations - that is expelled. We think it is bad luck because we think it would have been a greater contribution to world peace if both countries had remained and been able to play their part in a peaceful solution of the world's problems - but now it has occurred we have to live with it and we have to do all we can, whether it be the great countries or the more moderately sized countries like ourselves, in order to ensure that China, that is the People's Republic of China, does play its part in making a contribution to peace in the Asian area, particularly that part of the Asian area in which we live.

Q What future do you envision for the Taiwan Government in the world ?

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PM Well, Taiwan will decide its own future and the course of action that it will take in world affairs. I don't think it will make a dramatic difference but so much will depend upon the thinking of the Chiang Kai-shek Government, but of course trade will continue between Taiwan and other countries and it is difficult at this moment for anyone to make a precise analysis or a precise forecast of the likely course of action in diplomatic relationships. We haven't in Australia yet considered the question of diplomatic representation, but we have as a corollary to that, we are having discussions, preliminary discussions, with the People's Republic of China to develop more healthy bilateral relationships between our two countries.

Q Were you surprised at the outcome of the vote ?

PM Not surprised. Not being a betting man, I didn't have a bet on it. But I thought of the figures and I felt there would be two or three votes in it - that is the Important Question - and no more, and that's how it turned out. If two or three people had changed their votes, of course, the Important Question would have been passed and that would have required a two thirds majority to expel Taiwan. But once the Important Question was lost, then you could expect a lot of countries would jump on the bandwagon and they did. And although we had fallback positions, there was little hope of a fallback position succeeding. People did jump on the bandwagon, there were a lot I can assure you who disappointed us, even on the vote of the Important Question, because their best interests would have been served by voting in favour of the Important Question and the retention of the position of Taiwan. But having said all that, it is up to us now, and all those who believe in peace, particularly those who live in the Western Pacific area, to do our best and to try to draw China into the comity of nations and to try to harness the great power and influence of China in the interests of peace.

Q What effect, if any, does this have on Australia ?

PM Not a great deal of effect on us, but now we will be watching very carefully to see what action the People's Republic of China will take about our initiatives - initiatives taken by the Australian Government - to continue the dialogue and improve our relations with them. We have already commenced in several countries and there have been contacts about - not so much trade relationships, but improving trade contacts. We hope to be able to hear from the People's Republic soon about these. But might I make our position clear - I think this is wise - we have no restrictions on trade with them other than in strategic goods. We let our people go there freely. There are no restrictions placed upon our own people. We give them their passports and all they have to do is get a visa from the People's Republic. We welcome and encourage movement of cultural and scientific people. So there are very few restrictions. But nonetheless we will move steadily to improving our relationships. Much remains in their hands and, as you know, they don't move very quickly.