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## PRIME MINISTER

### MACQUARIE NETWORK WEEKLY BROADCAST

BY THE PRIME MINISTER, THE RT. HON. WILLIAM McMAHON, CH, MP

### NUCLEAR TESTS

21 JUNE 1972

Goodnight :

Lately there has been considerable public comment and controversy about the current series of French nuclear tests in the Pacific.

I want to explain to you, as clearly as I can, what the facts are about the Government's policy both on the French nuclear tests, and on all nuclear tests in the atmosphere, as well. No matter where they are undertaken and no matter which nation, friendly or unfriendly conducts them.

I want to explain, too, the facts about Australia's vote at the recent Environmental Conference in Stockholm. Once you have these facts, I invite you to make your own judgment on the many comments and opinions which are currently being heard on this subject.

Our policy on nuclear matters proceeds from the starting point that Australia's role in nuclear energy is concerned with its peaceful uses. The harnessing of the great force of nuclear energy remains one of the great opportunities for good of our generation.

So we have a twofold objective : We must learn to use nuclear technology for peace, but we must also contain, and eventually dissuade, its potential use for war and destruction.

As far back as 1963, a partial nuclear test ban treaty was concluded. It was supported by many nations. This treaty specifically bans nuclear tests in the atmosphere, in outer space, and under water.

Australia took its basic stand against nuclear tests when it ratified this treaty. It should be unmistakably clear, therefore, that our attitude is most definitely not a new or a belated one. Rather is it a clear, firm and long-standing policy introduced by, and supported by, successive Liberal and Country Party Governments, particularly my own.

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If anything, this strong opposition to atmospheric testing which Australia expressed in becoming a party to the partial test ban treaty nine years ago has become even stronger as time has passed.

In line with this long-standing policy of opposing the tests, we have repeatedly conveyed to the French Government, through the proper channels and in unequivocal terms the firm opposition of the Australian Government and people to French nuclear tests in the Pacific.

Australia was the first country to protest against the French tests in 1972. We have made that protest repeatedly since.

My Government is dedicated to upholding the partial nuclear test ban treaty. That is our policy. It has not changed and it will not change.

At Stockholm, we abstained at first on a resolution about nuclear tests because our primary purpose of opposing atmospheric tests was already covered by that policy. As well, we did not think the Environment Conference was the ideal forum to go into the difficult technical issues underlying questions of disarmament and world peace, including a more comprehensive treaty.

But because this action seemed to raise some doubts about our central policy of opposition, we decided to once again underline our fundamental opposition to all atmospheric tests for all time by voting for the resolution when it reached the plenary session at Stockholm. I hope this establishes my and my Government's position clearly.

In the modern world, it is possible for nations to have serious differences on some issues, while continuing to co-operate on others. President Nixon's visits to Peking and Moscow are examples.

I very sincerely regret to say once again that France has failed to respond, despite our co-operation with her in other areas. We have taken every reasonable step we can to persuade France to halt the tests.

Last Friday, the day after I arrived back from my visit to South-East Asia, I had a personal message conveyed to the President of France.

On Monday, in Sydney, I shared a platform with the French Ambassador to Australia. After hearing him speak, I felt obliged to state that none of the explanations the Ambassador had given would, in any way, or in any shape at all, change my own opposition or that of my Government or that of the Australian people to nuclear tests in the atmosphere.

Let there be no misunderstanding on this score. I and my Government want the current series of tests abandoned. That has been made as clear as crystal in the past few weeks and even as recently as last night when Mr Marshall and I sent a joint message to the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament in Geneva.

Thanks and Goodnight.

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