



# PRIME MINISTER

## OPENING OF THE AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS APPEAL FUND

### CANBERRA

Speech by the Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon William McMahon  
C.H., M.P.

31 AUGUST, 1972

This is a pleasant occasion for me and I hope your appeal on behalf of the Australian year of National Development of the Australian Institute of International Affairs, will attract widespread support throughout Australia.

In the time I have this evening I want to emphasise two points - that the making and public explanation of Australian foreign policy is of great and increasing importance to the future of this country; and that our foreign policy should be based on the understanding and support of the Australian people themselves.

No-one should underestimate the importance of Australia's involvement in the world around us at a time when there is a tendency to concentrate on our domestic issues. To underline the point, may I remind you of a remark made by the late President Kennedy. He said once -- and I quote him: "domestic policy can defeat us but foreign policy can kill us."

I endorse and support this view that the survival of man - and the continuing search for progress towards a stable and peaceful world - is very much a practical and necessary daily problem for the governments of the world.

A policy of isolation would not be in the best interests of Australia. Despite the fact that we are a prosperous island with relatively few problems, we are directly involved in changing world conditions of continuing importance to our own future security.

If peace is to be secure in the Asian and Pacific region in this decade, the United States, the Soviet Union, Japan and the People's Republic of China must come to some accommodation; and a balance must be found in which each will live with an understanding of the different systems, goals and aspirations of the others.

.../2

Arrangements must also be made which accommodate the determination of the smaller countries in the region to preserve and strengthen their own independent societies. It must be obvious that we in Australia have a constructive and helpful role to play in the Pacific theatre.

The other point I want to emphasise is that we believe that Australia's foreign policy should rest on the understanding and support of an enquiring and well-informed public opinion.

Ideally, in an educated democracy like Australia, foreign policy should grow out of the people. We want to see a more outward-looking Australian community with a great feeling of involvement in the affairs of the world around us, and I would like this informed public opinion to have more influence on the shaping of foreign policy. Our own foreign policy will obviously be more effective and stable if it enjoys widespread support based on the interest and understanding of an informed public.

An active Australian Institute of International Affairs can, and must play a vital role in improving such interest and understanding in seeking to inject informed ideas into public discussion of foreign policy, and in stimulating a greater feeling of public involvement in international issues facing Australia.

I believe that the work of the Institute is steadily and surely becoming of greater importance. Indeed, at this stage of our development, it is a role the Institute is well fitted to play. More than ever before, we want to establish a more distinctive Australian identity in a changing world. I therefore welcome the vision and energy the Institute is showing in seeking to strengthen its role.

The target of the appeal - \$300,000 - is a sizable one and it will not be achieved without considerable effort on the part of the organisers and without widespread and strong co-operation. I emphasise that the Institute is independent of the government - the success of the appeal will strengthen this independence and the capacity of the Institute and add depth to areas from which the government may draw in shaping official foreign policy. A successful appeal will also ensure that funds will be available for the national headquarters the Institute certainly should have.

For all of these reasons I have the greatest pleasure in launching the Institute's year of National Development and in asking you and your friends to contribute to this cause.

---