



PRIME MINISTER

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AUSTRALIAN RECOGNITION OF CHINA

At the Australian Institute of Political Science summer school in Canberra last weekend, two former Ministers for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Bowen and Mr. Bury, referred to allegations made in recent newspaper articles that Australia had accepted 23 conditions imposed by the People's Republic of China as the price of securing recognition by Australia. These articles suggested that Australia had to "toe the Peking Line" and agree to conditions for recognition more stringent than those accepted by states such as Chad and the Maldives.

In view of the currency given to these suggestions by ministers in the previous Government, I think it is important that I set the record straight. The reports mentioned by Mr. Bowen and Mr. Bury are totally fanciful. The facts are as I announced on 22 December, that a satisfactory agreement on the establishment of diplomatic relations was reached with China. I also published the joint communique and the exchange of letters between myself and Premier Chou En-lai.

It is nonsense to suggest that we have been discriminated against by the Chinese and forced to accept a variety of pre-conditions. The negotiations in Paris covered only questions relating to the recognition of China and the status of Taiwan. There was no secret agreement or understanding on other matters.

The wording of the published joint communique in which we acknowledge the position of the Chinese Government that Taiwan is a province of China is very similar in its wording to the Canadian and British formulas. The Maldives formula, which has been described as softer than ours was, in fact, harder, as the Maldives "recognised" Taiwan as an "inalienable part of the territory of the People's Republic".

CANBERRA. A.C.T.