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PRIME MINISTER AT JAPAN
PRESS CLUB

The following are the introductory remarks by the Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Whitlam, to the Japan Press Club in Tokyo on 26 October, and subsequent questions and answers:

I last had the pleasure of meeting representatives of the Japanese media a little more than 2 years ago. It was mid-July 1971. Very great changes have occurred in both our countries since then. Even greater changes have occurred in the prospects for our region. At that time, I was the Leader of the Opposition in the Parliament of my country. Now I have the honour to be Australia's Prime Minister. That is not a marvellously important change as far as you are concerned, though I have no doubt you will be interested in some of the changes of policy the election of my government has brought about. But at that last press conference, I had just completed a visit to Peking. Just 2 days after I spoke to you, President Nixon made his historic announcement that he intended to go to Peking before May 1972. I was still in Tokyo when he made his broadcast. I well remember the reaction here at the time. I can assure you that the surprise was felt in my country as well as yours. There was even some shock in some quarters in Australia. I myself was surprised, but delighted. Japan has been able to move very rapidly towards established honourable and sensible relations with the People's Republic. Australia recognised the People's Republic as soon as the new Government took office. The American detente with both China and the Soviet Union has been followed by the end of her tragic and disastrous intervention in Indo-China.

These are very important and hopeful developments in themselves. But because of the speed with which they took place, and because they represent such a marked change from the thinking and attitudes which have dominated the affairs of our region for a generation, they have created some uneasiness. It is not always easy to adjust to change, even when those changes are basically good and hopeful in themselves. I believe however, that countries like Japan and Australia have a duty to work together to ensure that the new opportunities for peace and progress in our region are not thrown away.

As you know, the reason for my current visit is to attend the Japan/Australian Ministerial Committee. This committee was established by agreement between the Governments of our two countries when a previous Australian Government was in office. The first meeting was held in Canberra last October. For this meeting in Tokyo, I have brought with me very senior Ministers in my government - our Treasurer Mr Crean, Minister for Overseas Trade, Dr Cairns, our Minister for

Minerals and Energy, Mr Connor and our Minister for Primary Industries (Agriculture) Senator Wreidt. I think the composition of our delegation speaks for itself about the importance Australia attaches to the Committee Meeting and to the relations with Japan. And you also can get some idea of the matters to be discussed by looking at the Ministerial responsibilities of these Ministers. In particular, we recognise that our policies regarding investment from overseas and the use of our resources are of particular interest to Japan. We recognise that Japan is entitled to be reassured that she will continue to have secure access to Australia's resources at fair prices. The Government and people of Japan can be reassured on that point.

The growth of close relations between Japan and Australia in recent years has been very remarkable. I am quite sure those relations will continue to the increasing mutual benefit of our two countries and I would hope to the benefit of our region.

Q. I understand that there is much opposition within Australia against the signing of a Treaty of Friendship, Commerce and Navigation with Japan, and I am given to understand that you yourself, Mr Prime Minister, have come up with certain ideas about this treaty. Could you tell us what you have in mind?

P.M. In past years the Government of Japan has suggested to the Government of Australia that Australia should enter into a Treaty of Friendship, Commerce and Navigation with Japan as very many other countries have already done.

Earlier Australian Governments were not enthusiastic about the offer. I wouldn't like you to think that they were hostile. That would not be an accurate description.

It has never been a very big public issue in Australia but it would be correct to say that earlier Australian Governments were not responsive to the suggestion.

My colleagues and I would welcome an arrangement between Japan and Australia which would acknowledge the very real significance that we have for each other.

We believe that there are great mutual advantages in our relationship. We believe there are great benefits to be shared between us in that relationship and we would like to have such an arrangement or treaty so that the conditions in which we co-operate and consult would be known to the whole world and would be acknowledged by each of the parties.

I suspect that this general idea will be discussed by the Japanese Ministers and the Australian Ministers at this second Ministerial Conference between our two countries on Monday and Tuesday of next week.

I am not suggesting that there should be a text laid on the table and people should discuss it in detail or specifics then, but I would think it desirable that in the weeks following this Ministerial Conference officials should discuss the general proposition.

Australia, in those circumstances, would be very happy to suggest the form of such written arrangements.

Q. Prime Minister, in the penultimate paragraph of your prepared remarks you say that Australia recognises the Japanese view in which the Australians concurred, about the Australian Minerals and Energy policy.

I would like to ask you whether you have come to Japan to spell out your policy.

P.M. I have spent quite a deal of time in recent weeks discussing these matters with the four Ministers who are coming with me, and our officials have done the same.

We Ministers and the officials have done so together, and I believe there will be quite an amount of specifics discussed on Monday and Tuesday.

Q. This question concerns migratory birds.

The Japanese Government has proposed that in the treaty for the protection of migratory birds - an awful lot of them fly between Australia and Japan - can you tell me what your view is towards this proposition and do you think this will be taken up at this Ministerial Conference?

Last year we signed a similar treaty between Japan and the United States and recently we signed it with the U.S.S.R.

We are trying to develop a coordinated system or network of such treaties for the protection of migratory birds, and could you tell us your view about the conservation and preservation of nature?

P.M. This treaty is not on the agenda for this Ministerial Conference.

We are very happy to enter into treaties to preserve wild life.

We have recently ratified, or taken steps to ratify an international treaty in this regard - endangered species - last year.

My government has acted to ratify this treaty, and we would be responsive to this suggestion.

There is, of course, one aspect of conservation which is of very great concern to Australia and Japan, and that is whales.

Q. Prime Minister, you have a Companies Takeover Act which is a legacy of the previous administration which is to expire by the end of December this year.

What is the view or policy of the Labor Administration towards overseas capital?

P.M. We will probably extend this piece of legislation.

I am not sure that by the end of the year we will be able to frame a better piece of legislation.

Therefore, we will probably just extend the present one.

Our general attitude towards foreign capital is the same as Japan's attitude to foreign capital.

One of the reasons why Japan has become so economically strong is that she has been very willing to learn from other countries but not to yield to other countries.

Ever since the Meiji era the Governments of Japan and Japanese companies have determined to preserve Japan's sovereignty and identity and integrity.

Japan, through the farsightedness and independence of earlier generations, is now in the situation of being the third greatest economic power in the world - and the country which has the best economic future proportionately in the world.

We believe in Australia we can learn from the Japanese example.

Obviously we can't muster all the capital we need by ourselves.

We can't develop all the skills we need by ourselves but this is not an excuse for being a minority partner or not being a partner at all in Australian resources and industries and their development.

In the last 15 years or less in Australia, we have discovered very great mineral resources.

Australian minerals as a whole are 62 per cent in foreign hands.

That is to Australia's disadvantage.

It is a reflection on preceding Australian Governments.

We are determined to see that that percentage does not grow.

We welcome partnerships within the discovery, the development, the marketing of our resources, and particularly we welcome partnerships with our best trading partners.

Of those, Japan would probably be the best.

Our understanding is that Japanese companies are willing to be good residents in other countries.

They are more understanding and cooperative partners than some of the older ones with whom Australia has lived hitherto.

We admire Japan's independence and farsightedness.

We hope to emulate it, and to work with her.

Q. In your prepared statement you talk about Japan's move toward China, the Australian move towards China and the American detente between China and the Soviet Union in the Indo-China war and then you say that these moves towards China have created some uneasiness and it is not always easy to adjust to change even when those changes are basically good and hopeful in themselves.

Is there any more in this, can you elaborate?

P.M. Last time I had a press conference in Tokyo was in July, 1971.

As I recall in the statement I circulated, it was just at the time when Dr Kissinger's visit to Peking was announced and the prospective visit of President Nixon was announced. *China*

This very clearly was an event which startled most countries in the region.

It startled the Government of Australia at the time.

And then events have moved with very great speed since then.

Japan, for instance, switched from Taipei to Peking in September last.

Australia did in December, and two years ago Peking was admitted to the U.N. and Taipei was excluded.

Now in all these circumstances a great number of the countries in this region - the western Pacific - were caught by surprise, and some of them still feel uneasy in the new circumstances.

It is in that context that I made this remark.

Q. There have been reports concerning the wreck of the Australian freighter "Blythe Star", apparently in the vicinity of Japanese trawlers who were strongly advised to go to the rescue of the crew.

They did not, disregarding one of the strongest rules of the sea.

Apparently they were pilfering Australian waters, and apparently they put fish above human life.

Are you going to take this matter up with the Japanese Government?

P.M. There are allegations to this effect, there has been no confirmation of the allegations.

The Ambassadors of Japan in Australia and of Australia in Japan, both of whom are at this conference, would be the proper persons to follow up any such allegations if they were confirmed.

Q. You mention in your statement that the growth of close relations between Japan and Australia in recent years has been very remarkable.

Could you outline your concept of the future of Australia/Japanese relations?

P.M. There are two particular aspects which are of outstanding relevance to the region: one is the direct relation between Japan and Australia.

Japan sells more things to Australia than any other country other than the U.S.

We are of very great importance to each other.

The other thing is that there is a vast contrast in development in all the economics and social standards between Japan and Australia on the one hand and all the countries which lie between them on the other hand.

Clearly, Japan and Australia can't be affluent enclaves in a deprived and potentially turbulent part of the world.

Those are the two things which make it particularly important that Australia and Japan should acknowledge their relations with each other and their responsibilities to their neighbours.

Could I illustrate from one particular industry, the automobile industry.

Automobile Industry

It is Australia's largest industry.

It is wholly in overseas hands.

You know that in Japan you would never have allowed your automobile industry to be in foreign hands.

We have noted the steps you took when Chrysler was wanting to invest here, we noted the steps you took in that case.

We should have had the foresight to act that way ourselves.

Some Japanese motor car companies are now interested in manufacturing in Australia, and the size, the style, the safety of Japanese cars is every bit as good as the counterpart quality of the cars which are manufactured by other overseas companies in Australia.

We believe that the Japanese companies would be better partners in very many respects than the companies which we already have.

Q. You mentioned earlier that under certain conditions you would agree to a Friendship, Commerce and Navigation Treaty.

What sort of conditions did you mean?

P.M. I decline to go into any further detail on this subject.

Q. I understand there is a certain fear in Japan about the future of Papua New Guinea.

Papua N.G.

Could you tell us a little about the future of Papua New Guinea and why should the Japanese be afraid of the future?

P.M. I wasn't aware that there was any fear in Japan about the future of Papua New Guinea.

There were no grounds in my view for any such fear.

I take this opportunity to discount any such fears.

Papua New Guinea will become a self-governing country on 1 December this year.

It will become an independent country within a very short time thereafter.

Papua New Guinea has shown, in the last few years, remarkable political development.

The Chief Minister of Papua New Guinea is very well disposed towards Japan.

His first schooling was received at the hands of the Japanese in the early 1940's in his country.

He has visited this country.

His prospective Minister for Foreign Affairs will be in Tokyo at these ministerial talks on Tuesday afternoon.

I would hope that Japanese companies and officials would have a continuing and confident interest in Papua New Guinea, as they should, I would suggest, have in all the countries between Australia and Japan because Japan has the greatest potential to realise and the greatest opportunity and I would therefore think the greatest obligation to help in the development of all these countries.

Australia has similar opportunities and, therefore, obligations in kind although not, of course, in degree.

Australia has done a very great deal to develop Papua New Guinea.

We would welcome assistance by Japan.

I think the Government of Papua New Guinea - a very effective government - would welcome such assistance too.

I would think there should be no fears as to the future of Papua New Guinea.

Q. Mr Prime Minister: You have for some time been advocating a conference of the Asian and Pacific region.

Do you mean this as a precedent for the now mummified ASPAC or SEATO or what were the implications for making such a conference in regard to the ASEAN.

Do you intend to make this proposal in this ministerial meeting and do you also intend to make this proposal to China.

P.M. I may well discuss the general idea both in Tokyo and in Peking.

I don't want to commit myself to the word "conference" but I think that there are advantages in having arrangements under which the countries of the Western Pacific and South East Asia can meet periodically to discuss matters of mutual interest.

The great disadvantage, I believe, that so many of the countries have suffered hitherto and Australia has certainly

*Possible
Asian
and
Pacific
conference*

suffered from this, is that whenever heads of government or foreign ministers of any countries of the region get together people expect that there will be some aid program or military pact emerge from their discussions.

We ought to become used to an exchange of view without any particular motive or agenda of that character.

Reference has been made to SEATO which arose in the general context of the Geneva Conference of 1954 and ASPAC which arose in the context of America's involvement when the Geneva Agreement finally broke down in the middle 1960's

SEATO

We now see how ineffective such arrangements were.

There are some economic arrangements and, for instance, one which Australia recently joined was the Ministerial Conference for the Development of South-East Asia, and we appreciate Japan's helpfulness in Australia joining that economic gathering.

Let me draw a couple of comparisons: in Africa there is the Organisation of African Unity, in the Americas there has been, for longer, the Organisation of American States.

When these bodies gather it is to the advantage of all of them to do so.

They all see advantages in doing so.

People don't have false hopes that there is going to be some military pact or aid program emerge from them.

Another body to which Australia belongs is the Commonwealth of Nations - the British Commonwealth of Nations which so many would recognise it - this is a body where there is no economic or military significance at all, but all the members find value in having this discussion in that context.

Commonwealth

There is no such body in this region, and I believe we are all the poorer for the want of it.

The only body which has a regional significance and viability is ASEAN.

ASEAN

ASEAN is, understandably, not wanting to extend until it has fully consolidated itself.

It has made very great progress indeed.

You mention China.

Obviously there are difficulties in this situation

where some of the countries in the region do not recognize Peking - I think that applies to two of them - there are others whose relations with Peking have been suspended or have never been activated although the countries I had in mind there have never recognized Taipei - to put it another way they do not assert, as Japan did and Australia did until December last year - that Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek was the President of the whole of China.

Obviously there are inhibitions in having such arrangements and consultations at this stage.

We, I suggest, want to get away from the idea that any arrangements in this region must have some ideological purpose or must have the participation of north Atlantic countries.

Each - the participation of north Atlantic countries, the ideological purposes - have both been shown to be counter-productive.

Q. A supplementary question: Australia participated in the South-East Asian Ministerial Conference for Economic Development recently in Tokyo for the first time and while Japan regards this gathering as a purely economic assembly, I take it that your view is not necessarily to regard it as purely an economic assembly.

I don't think you have rejected the possibility of this body developing in the future into some kind of regional cooperation arrangement with some political overtones.

May I invite you to comment on this?

P.M. We accept this body in the context in which it has operated up until now - an economic one.

We have no ulterior or concealed motives in joining it.

It is valuable in what it does, and it is not a substitute for further organisations because people may think that one also means "ideological".

I think one of the vices of arrangements in this region has been that so often they had ideological overtones.

Really, in this region, we have got to work more and more irrespective of ideology.

So, I don't want to use the word "political" because "ideological" is one aspect of "political".

The MEDSEA that we referred to and you asked about - that's economic, and valuable as an economic body.