

DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

INWARD CABLEGRAM

JMS6

I.15903

FROM

TOD 01.2.74...2345 LT

AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY  
BANGKOK

TOR 02.2.74...0501 LT

535 UNCLASSIFIED

PRIME MINISTER'S PRESS CONFERENCE, BANGKOK, 1 FEBRUARY 1974.

PRIME MINISTER :  
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

I HAVE OFTEN SEEN THE PRESS IN NIGHTCLUBS BEFORE BUT THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I HAVE GIVEN THEM A CONFERENCE IN ONE.

I HAVE HAD SOME HOURS NOW IN CONVERSATIONS WITH YOUR PRIME MINISTER LAST NIGHT AT THE RECEPTION AND AT THE DINNER AND ENTERTAINMENT, AND THIS MORNING WITH HIS AND MY OFFICIALS AT GOVERNMENT HOUSE.

WE WERE ABLE TO DISCUSS A VERY GREAT NUMBER OF MATTERS IN A MOST FRIENDLY AND FRANK FASHION.

THE LAST TIME WE HAD BEEN TOGETHER WAS IN THIS CITY NINE YEARS AGO AT A MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF JURISTS.

HE MADE SOME AUSTRALIAN FRIENDS AT THAT TIME IN THE LEGAL AND ACADEMIC SPHERES WHICH HAVE GIVEN HIM A VERY GREAT INTEREST IN AUSTRALIA.

I HAD LOOKED FORWARD VERY MUCH TO MEETING HIM BECAUSE HIS NAME IS GREATLY HONOURED RIGHT ROUND THE WORLD SINCE HE GOT SUCH OBVIOUS PUBLIC AND ROYAL APPROVAL ON 14 OCTOBER.

THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE THAI GOVERNMENT AND THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT, I AM SURE, ON A PERSONAL LEVEL, AT THE TOP LEVEL, WILL BE VERY HAPPY AND FRUITFUL INDEED.

THERE ARE TWO PARTICULAR MATTERS WHICH I MIGHT MENTION TO YOU AT THIS STAGE.

THERE IS THE PROSPECT, IN THE QUITE NEAR FUTURE, OF A CULTURAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES AND ALSO A TRADE AGREEMENT BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES.

I HAVE MENTIONED THE PRIME MINISTER'S INTEREST IN AUSTRALIA IN ACADEMIC AND LEGAL MATTERS.

HE IS NATURALLY, THEREFORE, VERY MUCH DISPOSED PERSONALLY TOWARDS A CULTURAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN US.

THE AGREEMENT WILL COVER, AMONG OTHER THINGS, THE PROVISION OF FACILITIES BY EACH COUNTRY IN THE OTHER COUNTRY FOR THE CITIZENS OF EACH TO LEARN THE LANGUAGE OF THE OTHER.

THERE WILL ALSO BE ARRANGEMENTS, WE EXPECT, FOR EXCHANGING MEN AND WOMEN OUTSTANDING IN SUCH FIELDS AS MUSIC, RADIO, TELEVISION, FILMS, ARTISTIC EXCHANGES AND ALSO IN SPORTING MATTERS.

IN REGARD TO THE TRADE AGREEMENT, OUR OFFICIALS ARE NOW PURSUING THIS MATTER AT THE OFFICIAL LEVEL.

THE PRIME MINISTER SHOWED HIMSELF VERY MUCH AWARE OF THE INITIATIVES MY GOVERNMENT HAS TAKEN IN RECENT MONTHS AND IN FACT UP TO THE VERY EVE OF MY DEPARTURE FROM AUSTRALIA, IN PROMOTING MATTERS OF TRADE AND, WHERE DESIRED, INVESTMENT, PRODUCTION OF TARIFFS OVERALL BY AUSTRALIA, REDUCTION FURTHER BY AUSTRALIA ON TARIFFS, ON GOODS COMING FROM DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, PROMOTING THE TRADE COMMISSIONER SERVICE IN THAILAND, THE MAKING AVAILABLE OF FACILITIES IN TRADE BY AUSTRALIAN OFFICIALS.

I MENTIONED SOME OF THESE MATTERS IN MY SPEECH AT LUNCH TIME.

...2

INWARD CABLEGRAM

-2-

I. 15903

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, ARE THERE ANY QUESTIONS YOU WOULD LIKE TO ASK ME?

THE AUSTRALIAN JOURNALISTS HAVE BEEN AROUND WITH ME AND WILL CONTINUE TO BE AROUND WITH ME, BUT THIS IS THE FIRST OPPORTUNITY I HAVE EVER HAD FOR A PRESS CONFERENCE AT THE HANDS OF THAI JOURNALISTS, OR INTERNATIONAL PRESS STATIONED IN BANGKOK, SO CAN THEY START.

IT WOULD HELP ME IF YOU WERE TO LET ME KNOW YOUR NAMES WHICH I MIGHT NOT CATCH IMMEDIATELY AND YOUR JOURNALS WHICH I HOPE I WOULD.

Q.

PRIME MINISTER, YOU HAVE MADE SEVERAL STATEMENTS ABOUT THE AMERICAN BASES IN THAILAND.

COULD YOU CLARIFY YOUR POSITION ABOUT IT?

PRIME MINISTER :

MORE SIGNIFICANTLY STILL I BELIEVE IS THE FACT THAT THE ROLE OF THE BASES HAS CHANGED.

MY GOVERNMENT AND BEFORE IT BECAME THE GOVERNMENT, MY PARTY, HAD HAD VERY GREAT QUALMS ABOUT, NOT ONLY QUALMS, THE STRONGEST OBJECTION TO BOMBING BY THE UNITED STATES AIRFORCE.

A GREAT DEAL OF THIS BOMBING TOOK PLACE FROM BASES IN THAILAND.

I FIRST BECAME AWARE OF THIS WHEN I VISITED UDOM IN JUNE OR JULY 1965.

AT THAT TIME, THERE WAS A FLIGHT OF AUSTRALIAN AIRFORCE FIGHTERS STATIONED AT UDOM.

AT THAT TIME, I SAW THE RELATIVELY SMALL BEGINNINGS OF THE UNITED STATES BOMBING OVER NORTH VIETNAM.

MY PARTY HAS ALWAYS HAD THE STRONGEST OBJECTION TO AMERICAN BOMBING.

IT THOUGHT THAT MILITARILY IT WAS INEFFECTIVE.

MORALLY, IT WAS MONSTROUS.

WE REGRETTED THAT THAI AIR BASES WERE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE.

THEY NO LONGER ARE AND I AM SATISFIED THERE COULD BE NO RESUMPTION OF AMERICAN BOMBING IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD.

THERE IS A NEW SITUATION THEREFORE.

Q.

COULD YOU PLEASE TELL US WHAT USE AUSTRALIA NOW SEES IN SEATO?

.....(UNCLEAR)

PRIME MINISTER:

WE HAVE NO OBJECTION TO THE MANILA TREATY.

I WISH PEOPLE WOULD READ THE PREAMBLE TO THE MANILA TREATY.

IT EXPRESSES VIEWS AND PRINCIPLES WHICH WERE AND STILL ARE VALID.

SUCH MATTERS AS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL JUSTICE.

THE MANILA TREATY IS SOUND.

THE SEATO ORGANISATION EMPHASISED AN ASPECT WHICH NO LONGER IS RELEVANT.

...3

INWARD CABLEGRAM

-3-

I.15903

SEATO AROSE OUT OF THE DULLES POLICY OF MILITARY CONTAINMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA.

THAT DOCTRINE LONG CEASED TO HAVE ANY VALIDITY.

IT WAS GIVEN THE COUP DE GRACE BY DR KISSINGER AND THEN PRESIDENT NIXON VISITING THE CAPITAL OF CHINA.

MY GOVERNMENT CAME TO OFFICE AND THE NEW ZEALAND GOVERNMENT, AT THE SAME TIME, RESOLVED TO DISMANTLE THE RESIDUAL ELEMENTS OF THAT DOCTRINE AS EMBODIED IN SEATO.

WE SPENT SOME MONTHS IN CONSULTING WITH THE SURVIVING MEMBERS OF THE MANILA TREATY ON THIS ISSUE AND THE RESULT WAS THE NEW ARRANGEMENTS WHICH WERE MADE IN NEW YORK BETWEEN THE VARIOUS FOREIGN MINISTERS LAST SEPTEMBER.

MY GOVERNMENT IS CONTENT WITH THE NEW ARRANGEMENTS.

I THINK THEY HAVE BEEN FULLY CONSUMMATED WITHIN THE LAST WEEK.

Q.

I WOULD LIKE TO ASK YOU ABOUT THE THAI STUDENTS THAT ARE GOING TO AUSTRALIA AND HAVE TO HAVE A TEST IN ENGLISH BECAUSE THAI IS NOT MALAYSIAN OR INDONESIAN THEY HAVE TO SPEAK ENGLISH MORE THAN THEIR OWN LANGUAGE, SO A THAI FINDS IT VERY DIFFICULT TO SPEAK THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

ALSO, WHAT IS THE POSITION ABOUT DISCRIMINATION OF A LOT OF THAI WOMEN MARRIED TO MEN IN AUSTRALIA.

THEY FIND IT A BIT DIFFICULT TO LIVE AMONG THE AUSTRALIANS.

HOW WOULD YOU HELP THEM WITH THESE THINGS?

PRIME MINISTER:

THERE ARE TWO MATTERS WHICH THE LADY RAISES.

THE SECOND ONE I HAVE NO COMMENT TO OFFER.

I HAVE NO IMPRESSION WHATEVER THAT WHERE A THAI CITIZEN HAS MARRIED AN AUSTRALIAN CITIZEN THAT THEY HAVE NOT BEEN HAPPY WHETHER THEY WERE LIVING IN AUSTRALIA OR IN THAILAND.

THERE ARE MANY MARRIAGES OF WHICH I AM AWARE AND THEY HAVE ALL BEEN VERY HAPPY MARRIAGES.

I WOULD NOT THINK THERE IS ANY DIFFICULTY IN EITHER COUNTRY FOR THE PARTNERS IN SUCH MARRIAGES.

THE OTHER MATTER ABOUT THE USE OF, OR THE FAMILIARITY WITH ENGLISH FOR STUDENTS AT AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITIES IS A MATTER OF WHICH I HAVE ONLY BECOME AWARE OF IN THE LAST 24 HOURS.

I HAVE DISCUSSED IT WITH OUR AMBASSADOR HERE AND I HAVE DISCUSSED IT WITH MR. BEAZLEY, OUR MINISTER FOR EDUCATION WHO HAS FOR THE LAST FEW DAYS BEEN ATTENDING SEAMEO, THE MINISTERIAL MEETING OF MINISTERS OF EDUCATION IN SOUTH-EAST ASIA WHERE WE AND NEW ZEALAND WERE ADMITTED FOR THE FIRST TIME AS ASSOCIATE MEMBERS.

SO MR. BEAZLEY IS AWARE OF THIS SITUATION ALSO.

NEXT WEEK, MR. GRASSBY, MY MINISTER FOR IMMIGRATION, WILL BE VISITING BANGKOK AND THE AMBASSADOR WILL DISCUSS THIS MATTER WITH HIM.

SO, I CAN ASSURE YOU THAT MY MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, MY MINISTER FOR IMMIGRATION AND I, MYSELF ARE NOW AWARE OF THIS MATTER, AND FOR MYSELF, IT IS ONLY NOW THAT I HAVE BECOME AWARE OF IT.

INWARD CABLEGRAM

- 4 -

I. 15903

PERHAPS I CAN HELP IF I MAKE A FEW GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ABOUT IT. IN ALL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN AUSTRALIA, ENGLISH IS THE ONLY LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION.

AND, AT THE UNIVERSITIES IT IS OBVIOUSLY NECESSARY TO HAVE A THOROUGH COMMAND OF ENGLISH IF ONE IS TO PROFIT FROM ANY OF THE COURSES.

WE HAVE ABOUT 10,000 STUDENTS FROM OVERSEAS AT AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITIES.

ABOUT 8,500 OF THESE OVERSEAS UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN AUSTRALIA COME FROM HONG KONG OR FROM SINGAPORE OR FROM MALAYSIA AND IN EACH CASE NEARLY ALL OF THEM ARE PERSONS OF ETHNIC CHINESE ORIGIN.

IN EACH CASE, HONG KONG, SINGAPORE, MALAYSIA, THEY ARE THOROUGHLY FAMILIAR WITH THE USE OF ENGLISH.

AT THIS STAGE, SECONDARY EDUCATION AND TECHNICAL SECONDARY EDUCATION SUCH AS PROFESSIONAL AND SCIENTIFIC COURSES - AS DISTINCT FROM CULTURAL COURSES - AND HELD IN ENGLISH.

ACCORDINGLY, STUDENTS FROM THOSE COUNTRIES ARE ABLE TO PARTICIPATE IN LECTURES AND SEMINARS AND COURSES AT AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITIES WITHOUT ANY DIFFICULTY WHATEVER.

IT IS OBVIOUSLY AND REGRETTABLY MUCH MORE DIFFICULT FOR STUDENTS FROM OTHER COUNTRIES, WHICH DON'T PRIMARILY USE ENGLISH, TO PARTICIPATE IN THOSE LECTURES AND SEMINARS AND COURSES.

IT MIGHT NOT MATTER SO MUCH, SAY, IN THE CASE OF INDONESIA BECAUSE IT IS RARE FOR INDONESIANS TO UNDERGO EDUCATIONAL COURSES OVERSEAS BEFORE THEY ALREADY HAVE ONE UNIVERSITY DEGREE, AND AS A MATTER OF POLICY, THE INDONESIAN GOVERNMENT ENCOURAGES STUDENTS TO HAVE THEIR FIRST DEGREE IN INDONESIA AND MAYBE DISCOURAGES THEM FROM COURSES BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY DEGREE.

THE OTHER ASEAN COUNTRY, THE PHILIPPINES, HASN'T LOOKED VERY MUCH TO AUSTRALIA FOR ADVANCED EDUCATION BUT TO THE UNITED STATES.

I THEREFORE HAVE BECOME AWARE OF THIS PARTICULAR PROBLEM AS REGARDS THAILAND.

THERE ARE TWO PARTICULAR FEATURES ABOUT THAI EDUCATION WHICH WOULD DISTINGUISH IT FROM SOME OTHER COUNTRIES IN RESPECT TO OVERSEAS STUDIES.

THE FIRST IS THAT THAI STUDENTS WHO HAVE GOT OVERSEAS QUALIFICATIONS OVERWHELMINGLY GO HOME AFTER THEY HAVE ACQUIRED THOSE QUALIFICATIONS.

THERE IS, THEREFORE, NOT THE DIFFICULTY WHICH IS SOMETIMES ENCOUNTERED IN RESPECT TO STUDENTS WHO COME FOR UNIVERSITY DEGREES IN AUSTRALIA OF THEIR NOT WANTING TO GO BACK TO THEIR OWN COUNTRY.

THERE HAS BEEN SOME MISUNDERSTANDING OR EVEN ILL-FELING BETWEEN AUSTRALIA AND SINGAPORE ON THIS ISSUE.

SINGAPORE HAS COMPLAINED OF A 'BRAIN DRAIN'.

NOW THIS WOULD NOT APPLY IN THAILAND.

AT LEAST 80 PER CENT, I AM TOLD, OF THE THAIS WHO OBTAIN OVERSEAS QUALIFICATIONS GO BACK TO THAILAND.

THAILAND HAS THE VERY GREAT ADVANTAGE OF HAVING HAD, FOR CENTURIES, INDEPENDENCE AND IDENTITY.

THE STUDENTS ARE PRIMARILY PATRIOTS WANTING TO GO HOME TO SERVE THEIR FELLOW CITIZENS.

INWARD CABLEGRAM

-5-

I. 15903

THE OTHER QUITE UNUSUAL FEATURE ABOUT THAI STUDENTS OUTSIDE THEIR COUNTRY IS THAT THEY GO AT A MUCH YOUNGER AGE.

SO MANY THAI STUDENTS ARE ENCOURAGED BY THEIR FAMILIES TO GO TO SCHOOL IN OTHER COUNTRIES, NOT JUST TO GO TO UNIVERSITIES OR COLLEGES BUT TO GO TO SCHOOL.

ONE OF THE OBJECTIVES IS TO OBTAIN A WORKING FAMILIARITY WITH ENGLISH OR OTHER LANGUAGES WHILE THEY ARE STILL YOUNG AND ADAPTABLE.

THERE ARE NOT SO MANY SECONDARY STUDENTS FROM THAILAND IN AUSTRALIA.

THERE HAVE BEEN SOME HUNDREDS, THERE ARE STILL SOME HUNDREDS, THERE ALWAYS WILL BE I HOPE A VERY GREAT NUMBER OF THAI STUDENTS.

WE WILL HAVE TO LOOK AT THIS ASPECT OF HAVING SECONDARY COURSES FOR THAI STUDENTS.

NOW THERE ARE SOME TECHNICAL MATTERS ABOUT THE APPLICATION OF THIS TEST WHICH I WILL HAVE TO LOOK INTO OR WHICH MY MINISTERS WILL HAVE TO LOOK INTO WHEN THEY GO BACK TO AUSTRALIA.

WE ARE A FEDERAL SYSTEM IN AUSTRALIA.

THIS YEAR, THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT HAS ACCEPTED THE COMPLETE FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR EVERY UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE IN AUSTRALIA.

BUT ALL THESE UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED UNDER STATE LAWS, AND IT IS NOT POSSIBLE FOR THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO LAY DOWN THE EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS, TESTS AND SO ON, WHICH APPLY IN THESE UNIVERSITIES.

WE CAN PERHAPS LEAN ON THEM OR TO USE A TERM THAT I ONCE USED IN ANOTHER CONNECTION, WE CAN NUDGE THEM, BUT WE CANNOT CONTROL THEM.

IT IS A MATTER WHERE WE CAN USE OUR INFLUENCES.

I AM GLAD YOU RAISED THIS MATTER, I MUST CONFESS I WAS NOT AWARE OF IT UNTIL I SET OUT ON THIS JOURNEY.

IT IS A MATTER WHERE MY GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT WANT TO SEE THAT THERE WAS ANY DISADVANTAGE FOR THAI STUDENTS AS AGAINST ANY OTHER OVERSEAS STUDENTS IN AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLS OR UNIVERSITIES.

Q.

THERE HAS BEEN AN INCREASE IN COMMUNIST ACTIVITIES IN NORTH-EAST THAILAND IN THE PAST TWO OR THREE MONTHS.

WITH REGARD TO YOUR REMARKS TODAY, I WONDER IF YOU WOULD COMMENT ON THIS - ON THE INCREASE OF COMMUNIST ACTIVITIES IN NORTH-EASTERN THAILAND?

WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED FROM THE PRIME MINISTER OF THAILAND?

PRIME MINISTER :

I HAVEN'T DISCUSSED THIS MATTER.

I HAVEN'T RAISED THIS MATTER AND IT HASN'T BEEN RAISED WITH ME.

WE HAVE BEEN LESS THAN A DAY HERE, BUT AT THIS STAGE I HAVE NOT BEEN INVOLVED IN ANY DISCUSSIONS ON THIS ISSUE.

Q.

HAS OUR GOVERNMENT REQUESTED YOU TO ACT AS A MEDIATOR BETWEEN US AND THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM?

PRIME MINISTER :

NO.

INWARD CABLEGRAM

-6-

I. 15903

Q.

COULD YOU TELL US THE MEANING OF YOUR TRIP TO SOUTH-EAST ASIA ESPECIALLY IN RELATION TO THE ASEAN NATIONS?

HOW IS AUSTRALIA GOING TO MAKE BETTER RELATIONS WITH ASEAN NATIONS?

PRIME MINISTER :

I SUPPOSE I CAN GIVE YOU AN ILLUSTRATION FROM THE MATTER THAT THE LADY NEXT BUT ONE TO YOU RAISED.

THIS QUESTION OF THE FAMILIARITY WITH ENGLISH WHICH IS REQUIRED BEFORE STUDENTS ARE ADMITTED TO OUR INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING.

THAT WOULD BE A MATTER WHICH I CAN PROMOTE AS A RESULT OF VISITING ONE OF THE ASEAN NATIONS.

THERE WERE SEVERAL MATTERS IN THE TRADE FIELD WHICH AROSE DURING MY VISIT TO MALAYSIA.

THERE ARE MATTERS AS I MENTIONED IN THE CULTURAL AND TRADE AGREEMENT FIELD WHICH HAVE COME UP IN THIS VISIT TO THAILAND.

AUSTRALIA'S RELATIONS WITH ALL THE ASEAN NATIONS ARE GOOD.

THEY ARE NOW TAKING PLACE ON A COLLECTIVE BASE ALSO.

IT WAS A COUPLE OF WEEKS AGO, WASN'T IT, THAT AUSTRALIA WAS INVITED TO CONFER WITH THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF ASEAN COLLECTIVELY ON ASEAN PROJECTS SO WHILE OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH EVERY ASEAN NATION HAVE ALWAYS BEEN GOOD, WE ARE NOW DEVELOPING COLLECTIVE RELATIONS WITH ASEAN NATIONS.

IT WAS ENCOURAGING FOR ME, ON THIS VISIT, TO HEAR DIRECTLY FROM PROFESSOR SANYA HOW MUCH THE THAI GOVERNMENT SUPPORTS THE PRINCIPLE WHICH ASEAN ADOPTED ON THE INITIATIVE OF MALAYSIA FOR A ZONE OF PEACE FREEDOM AND NEUTRALITY IN THE ASEAN AREA GUARANTEED BY THE GREAT POWERS.

THERE HAVE BEEN SOME SUGGESTIONS THAT THIS WAS A MATTER UPON WHICH MALAYSIA WAS MORE INTENT THAN THE OTHER ASEAN MEMBERS.

IT IS QUITE CLEAR TO ME NOW THAT THAILAND IS ALSO NO LESS INTENT ON IT, SO A VISIT LIKE THIS ENABLES ME DIRECTLY AND PROMPTLY TO ACT ON MATTERS WHICH CONCERN ASEAN NATIONS.

I THINK THIS IS THE GREAT ADVANTAGE OF A VISIT LIKE THIS TO FOUR OF THEM WHICH I AM MAKING, AND TO TWO OF THEIR IMMEDIATE NEIGHBOURS WHOM THEY WOULD LIKE TO ENROL IN ASEAN.

Q.

ALTHOUGH YOU HAVE STATED PUBLICLY THAT IT WAS NOT WITHIN YOUR COUNTRY'S INTEREST TO JOIN ASEAN AND THAT YOU LOOK FORWARD TO A LARGER GROUPING, NAMELY ASEAN, MY QUESTION IS WHAT HAS BEEN THE EFFORT ON THE PART OF YOUR GOVERNMENT IN TRYING TO ESTABLISH A LINK WITH ASEAN, OR CAN WE EXPECT PERHAPS ON A TOKEN BASIS AN AUSTRALIAN LINK WITH ASEAN IN THE NEAR FUTURE?

YOU WANT AN ASIAN FORUM SPANNING COUNTRIES IN THE PACIFIC TO INCLUDE ALSO JAPAN AND CHINA BUT WHAT ARE THE CHANCES THAT JAPAN AND CHINA WON'T DOMINATE IT - JAPAN ECONOMICALLY AND CHINA POLITICALLY?

PRIME MINISTER :

AUSTRALIAN HASN'T BEEN ASKED TO JOIN ASEAN BY ANY OF ITS MEMBERS AND AUSTRALIA HASN'T ASKED TO JOIN ASEAN.

INWARD CABLEGRAM

-7-

I.15903

I WOULD EXPECT THAT THE ASEAN MEMBERS WOULD PROBABLY BELIEVE AND AUSTRALIA WOULD ACKNOWLEDGE THE FACT THAT THERE ARE, AT THIS STAGE, TWO DISPARITIES ECONOMICALLY BETWEEN AUSTRALIA AND EACH OF THE ASEAN COUNTRIES OF SUCH SIZE THAT IT WOULD DISTORT THE GENERAL CONCEPT OF ASEAN.

WE ARE VERY HAPPY AT THE PROGRESS THAT ASEAN HAS MADE BECAUSE IT IS A NATURAL ASSOCIATION OF CONTIGUOUS NATIONS.

IT IS RELEVANT INCREASINGLY AND IT IS GROWING IN COHESION ALL THE TIME.

IT IS SATISFACTORY FOR ASEAN AND ALSO FOR AUSTRALIA THAT WE HAVE BEEN ASKED TO CONSULT AS I JUST SAID ON ASEAN PROJECTS, PROJECTS WHICH ARE PUT UP ON A COLLECTIVE BASIS OR PROJECTS WHICH MIGHT AFFECT MORE THAN ONE ASEAN COUNTRY.

NOW, THOSE ARE FRUITFUL ASSOCIATIONS BETWEEN AUSTRALIA AND ASEAN.

THERE IS NO NEED TO MAKE THEM MORE FORMAL BY JOINING THE BODY.

ALL THE ASEAN NATIONS HAVE HAD ASSOCIATIONS AT ONE TIME OR ANOTHER WITH REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS.

THERE WAS ASA, THERE WAS MAPHILINDO, THERE WAS SEATO, THERE WAS ASPAC.

ASEAN IS THE ONLY ONE TO WHICH ALL THE PRESENT FIVE MEMBERS HAVE BEEN ABLE TO ADHERE.

IT IS THE ONLY ONE WHICH HAS A GROWING FUTURE AHEAD OF IT.

THE WHO IDEA OF REGIONAL CO-OPERATION HAS HAD A LOT OF ATTENTION IN EACH OF THE ASEAN MEMBERS UP TILL NOW, BUT ASEAN IS THE ONLY ONE THAT REALLY HAS MOMENTUM.

NOW YOU MENTION THE POSSIBILITY OF DOMINANCE ECONOMICALLY, POLITICALLY - I DON'T KNOW WHAT OTHER WAY, IF THERE WAS A WIDER ASSOCIATION IN SAY THE WESTERN PACIFIC OR IN SOUTH-EAST ASIA.

THIS CAN ALWAYS HAPPEN IN ANY ASSOCIATION.

I'LL GIVE AN INSTANCE OF AN ASSOCIATION - THE FIRST ONE TO WHICH AUSTRALIA BELONGS - THE COMMONWEALTH OF NATIONS, THE BRITISH COMMONWEALTH OF NATIONS AS SOME PEOPLE MIGHT CALL IT.

NOW IT MIGHT BE THOUGHT THAT IN AN ORGANISATION OF ABOUT 34 NATIONS WHICH VARY IN SIZE FROM INDIA WITH HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS OF POPULATION, TO OTHERS WHICH HAVE LESS THAN ONE MILLION POPULATION, THERE WOULD BE TOO MUCH DISPARITY THAT ONE NATION WOULD DOMINATE ANOTHER, THAT COUNTRIES WHICH HAVE A VERY LARGE INCOME PER HEAD OF POPULATION LIKE BRITAIN AND CANADA OR AUSTRALIA OR NEW ZEALAND OR SINGAPORE WOULD BE ABLE TO DOMINATE COUNTRIES WHICH HAD A SMALLER INCOME PER HEAD OF POPULATION.

IT DOESN'T HAPPEN.

IT IS VALUABLE FOR ALL OF THEM TO GET TOGETHER AND SEE WHAT THEY HAVE IN COMMON.

NOBODY THESE DAYS TALKS OF LEAVING THE COMMONWEALTH OF NATIONS.

EVERY COLONY, ON BECOMING INDEPENDENT, WANTS TO JOIN IT.

EVERY COUNTRY THAT BECOMES INDEPENDENT WHICH HAS BEEN RULED BY BRITAIN OR THESE IS ONE THAT HAS BEEN RULED BY AUSTRALIA, PAPUA NEW GUINEA, AS SOON AS THEY ARE INDEPENDENT THEY WANT TO JOIN THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE COMMONWEALTH OF NATIONS.

INWARD CABLEGRAM

-8-

I.15903

THEY ARE NOT WORRIED ABOUT DOMINATION.

THESE ARE NOT SUCH FORMAL BODIES.

THERE MIGHT BE SOME SUCH MISGIVINGS IN THE ORGANISATION OF AMERICAN STATES WHERE, ON SOME ISSUES, SUCH AS CUBA, IT MIGHT BE THOUGHT THE UNITED STATES WANTED TO LEAN TOO HEAVILY ON THE OTHER MEMBERS.

IT MIGHT BE SAID SO IN THE ORGANISATION OF AFRICAN UNITY WHERE YOU CAN GET VERY LARGE STATES, VERY RICH STATES, LIKE NIGERIA, BUT THEY DON'T TRY TO DOMINATE AND THEY ARE NOT RESENTED.

THERE ARE NO ALLEGATIONS THAT THEY ARE DOMINATING.

I DON'T BELIEVE THAT ONE OUGHT TO BE NEGATIVE IN THESE RESPECTS.

IT IS ONLY BY REGULARLY AND INFORMALLY CONSULTING THAT WE REALLY GET TO UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER.

IF WE HAVE BILATERAL VISITS, EVEN SUCH FAIRLY RELAXED ONES SUCH AS THE ONE I AM ENGAGED IN AT THE MOMENT, IT STILL LIMITS THE OPPORTUNITIES THAT ONE WOULD LIKE TO HAVE BECAUSE YOU JUST CAN'T MAKE VISITS AS OFTEN AS YOU WOULD LIKE.

BUT YOU CAN ALL PUT TIME ASIDE, ALL FOREIGN MINISTERS, OR HEADS OF GOVERNMENT, CAN PUT TIME ASIDE ONCE EVERY YEAR OR TWO YEARS TO GET TOGETHER IN BODIES SUCH AS THE COMMONWEALTH OF NATIONS.

AND, I THINK THAT IN DUE COURSE WHEN, FOR INSTANCE, THERE IS THE ZONE OF PEACE, FREEDOM AND NEUTRALITY, THIS WOULD MAKE A WIDER ASSOCIATION VERY MUCH EASIER.

THERE ARE SOME OTHER SUCH ASPECTS SUCH AS THE DIFFERENCE IN ATTITUDE TOWARDS CHINA.

EVERYBODY HAS TO RECOGNISE EITHER TAIPEI OR PEKING AS BEING THE SEAT OF GOVERNMENT OF CHINA.

NOBODY, BUT NOBODY, CAN RECOGNISE BOTH GOVERNMENTS.

EACH GOVERNMENT INSISTS THAT YOU RECOGNISE IT AND DISREGARD THE OTHER.

NOW, WE HAVE MADE OUR DECISION IN THIS MATTER, BUT WE DON'T OVERLOOK THE FACT THAT IT IS MORE DIFFICULT FOR OTHER NATIONS WHICH MAY HAVE A LONGER HISTORICAL INVOLVEMENT.

Q.

REGARDING CHINA.

ONE OF THE IMAGES OF AUSTRALIA/THAI DIPLOMACY WAS IN A STATEMENT YOU MADE LAST YEAR SAYING THAT THAILAND SHOULD RECOGNISE MAINLAND CHINA.

DO YOU SEE ANY CHANGE IN THAI DIPLOMACY ON THIS?

PRIME MINISTER :

I DON'T REMEMBER EVER MAKING A STATEMENT THAT THAILAND, INDIVIDUALLY, SHOULD RECOGNISE CHINA BY WHICH ... I WOULD REGARD IT AS INEVITABLE THAT SOONER OR LATER ALL THE ASEAN NATIONS SHOULD HAVE NORMAL DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH PEKING AS THE SEAT OF THE GOVERNMENT OF CHINA.

I WOULD THINK THAT IS INEVITABLE.

I DON'T THINK ANYBODY WOULD DISPUTE THAT IT IS INEVITABLE BUT IT IS NOT FOR ME TO MAKE THE DECISION.

AFTER ALL, ASEAN IS NOT IN AGREEMENT AMONG ITS OWN MEMBERS ON THIS ISSUE.

INDONESIA HAS NEVER SAID THAT GENERALISSIMO CHIANG KAI-SHEK WAS THE PRESIDENT OF CHINA.



DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

INWARD CABLEGRAM

-9-

I. 15903

TWO OTHER ASEAN NATIONS STILL SAY THAT HE IS.

TWO OTHERS HAVE NEVER SAID WHO WAS THE PRESIDENT OF CHINA.

SO, IT SHOULDN'T BE NECESSARY TO POINT OUT THAT WE ARE IN A COMPLETELY NEW BALL GAME SINCE THE 14TH OF OCTOBER.

EVEN BEFORE THAT DATE, THERE WERE CONTACTS BETWEEN BANGKOK AND PEKING.

THEY HAVE CONTINUED.

I BELIEVE THAT THEY ARE LIKELY TO PROVE PRODUCTIVE BUT I CAN SEE THERE ARE MORE DIFFICULTIES IN REGARD TO RELATIONS BETWEEN BANGKOK AND PEKING THAN THERE ARE IN RELATIONS BETWEEN CANBERRA AND PEKING.

ALL THAT WE HAD TO DO IN CANBERRA WAS TO SAY WHAT I SAID IN MY PROGRAM FOR THE ELECTIONS 14 MONTHS AGO, THAT WE WOULD MOVE AUSTRALIA'S EMBASSY FROM TAIPEI TO PEKING.

WE HAD AN AMBASSADOR TO CHINA.

WE ACCREDITED HIM TO PRESIDENT CHIANG KAI-SHEK.

WHEN WE CAME IN, WE DISCONTINUED THAT ACCREDITATION.

WE SOUGHT AND WE QUICKLY GAINED ACCREDITATION TO THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT IN PEKING.

IT WAS RELATIVELY EASY FOR US.

WE ARE MORE DISTANT AND OUR ASSOCIATION IS SIMPLER.

Q.

WHAT IS YOUR ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE SOVIET PRESENCE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN, AND IF YOU HAVE CONSIDERED IT, HOW DO YOU EXPECT TO HANDLE IT?

BRITAIN SAID THE DAY BEFORE YESTERDAY THAT CONFRONTATION BETWEEN THE SUPER POWERS IN THE INDIAN OCEAN HAS TO COME, THAT CEYLON'S AND INDIA'S ATTITUDE OF A PEACEFUL INDIAN OCEAN IS UNREALISTIC.. (UNCLEAR)

PRIME MINISTER :

WELL, I WON'T COMMENT ON WHAT THE LADY HAD TO SAY.

WE ARE ON THE INDIAN OCEAN IN AUSTRALIA AS WELL AS ON THE PACIFIC OCEAN.

I HAVE NOT LOOKED AT THIS MATTER ON THIS VISIT.

I HAVE NO COMMENTS I WANT TO MAKE ON THIS VISIT, BUT I DO NOT WANT TO SPEAK IN THESE MATTERS IN TERMS OF THREATS AND SO ON.

THE FACT IS THAT SOME NATIONS HAVE QUITE LARGE NAVIES.

AS THE LAW OF THE SEA STANDS AT THE MOMENT, THEY CAN SAIL THE HIGH SEAS.

I WOULD NOT LIKE THE INDIAN OCEAN TO BECOME A SCENE OF CONFRONTATION AS SAY THE MEDITERRANEAN HAS.

I BELIEVE WE WOULD HAVE THE SUPPORT OF MOST OF THE COUNTRIES IN THE COMMONWEALTH OF NATIONS, SO MANY OF WHICH LIE WITHIN AND AROUND THE INDIAN OCEAN.

JUST AS THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT HAS POSITIVELY SUPPORTED THE ASEAN INITIATIVE FOR A ZONE OF PEACE, FREEDOM AND NEUTRALITY, SO TOO THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT HAS POSITIVELY SUPPORTED THE SRI LANKAN PROPOSAL FOR A NEUTRAL INDIAN OCEAN, AND AUSTRALIA IS A MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE WHICH THE UNITED NATIONS HAS SET UP TO PROMOTE THAT CONCEPT.

DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
INWARD CABLEGRAM

-10-

I.15903

A/PRIME MINISTER  
FOREIGN MINISTER  
FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
MIN AND DEPT DEFENCE  
TREASURER AND TREASURY  
J. I. O.  
A. I. S.  
MEDIA  
AID OFFICE  
OVERSEAS TRADE  
SECONDARY INDUSTRY  
FM'S PRESS SECRETARY  
FM AND C  
FM'S