

PRIME MINISTER'S PRESS CONFERENCE  
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QUESTION: We had a report from your country that the Shah of Iran mentioned a possible exchange agreement of oil and Australian uranium. Could you tell us something about this?

PRIME MINISTER: It would be putting it too simply to say an exchange of oil and uranium. The Trade Agreement which Australia has made with Iran doesn't mention oil. It is not, I understand, the Iranian practice to mention oil in her Trade Agreement with other countries. The Shah is very interested in obtaining regular supplies from Australia of those resources which Australia is fortunately situated. Uranium, of course, iron ore and the like. The suggestion is that - no arrangements have been completed of course - the Iranian Government could take in some of the Australian instrumentalities in this field such as the Australian Industries Development Corporation or the Petroleum and Minerals Authority. This would be a way of preserving Australian ownership and control of these basic Australian resources and at the same time guaranteeing a certain share of the resources for the purchaser.

QUESTION: Can you just give us an idea of the amount of uranium they want?

PRIME MINISTER: No, there has been nothing so specific as that. All the discussions we had last week were to produce a climate in which we can then get down to the details of the arrangements. But we were very pleased with the discussions and got to understand each other very well. The sort of resources the Shah would like to obtain from Australia, and also, of course, he emphasises his preference for Government-to Government arrangements in respect to resources and to operate through state corporations.

QUESTION: Sir, one of the American newsagencies today reports from Australia that the climate of your Government and you personally are becoming recently more friendly to the United States since Mr Nixon. Can you say anything about your present relations with the United States?

PRIME MINISTER: I believe our relations with the U.S. have been friendly all along. I don't want to personalise these relations. I would think that relations between the United States and Australia would be satisfactory whatever the Government was in Australia or the United States. There is a basic community of interests.

QUESTION: I was intrigued by your opening lines in your speech where you referred to the fact that you are the first Head of an Australian social democratic Government to speak at the United Nations. I have studied your philosophies carefully so I have some conception of what changes you have brought. My question is designed to clarify what a social democratic government means in terms, of course, internally, and what does it mean in terms of foreign policy? I didn't ~~was~~ to ask you what it means in terms, ideologically, because I want to avoid that and I want to spare you that?

PRIME MINISTER: Don't spare me. Let me cite what I would regard as the social democrat governments at the moment or in recent years. There would be the Scandinavian countries, West Germany, Austria, Britain, New Zealand, Australia. Those countries in particular would have what we call Democratic Socialist Labor Governments. Well, there are others one could add, the Netherlands. Now you can see from those other countries I have mentioned what would be the general attitude of an Australian Labor Government in international affairs. We would probably place particular emphasis on the United Nations. The other side in politics would be inclined to say that we would take a starry-eyed attitude towards the United Nations. Internally there would be particular emphasis by social democratic governments on government initiatives in social and as well as in economic directions. The last question I was asked regarding resources you can see as an illustration. In Australia our Government would be wanting to promote or create those public institutions for the discovery, the development, the marketing of natural resources such as the Petroleum and Minerals Authority and the Australian Industries Development Corporation.

QUESTION: Can I follow this through with a supplementary question on that in light of the fact that the Foreign Minister of Malaysia referred to the organisation of South East Asia in a regional phase as a region of peace and neutrality. Now, does the social democratic government concept, as you would apply it regionally, mean that you in effect - and I know that you are working very closely in South East Asia with your neighbours - that the region is gearing itself to join the non aligned concept of the world?

PRIME MINISTER: My Government supports the ASEAN concept which you quote as being expressed by the Foreign Minister of Malaysia. Australia and Malaysia follow a very closely similar line in all foreign affairs matters in South East Asia and in the Indian Ocean. I'm not particularly anxious to adopt a nomenclature aligned or non-aligned. As I said in my speech to the Plenary yesterday we are aligned in some traditional ways for which we don't apologise. Nevertheless, we want to avoid a polarisation in the Indian Ocean, for instance, between the two superpowers.

QUESTION: I have two other questions. The first one concerns the five nation agreement which you have among Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia and Singapore.

PRIME MINISTER: And Britain.

QUESTION: Yes. What is Australia's view regarding the continued validity and effectiveness of this agreement, in particular the stationing of ASEAN Forces in Singapore? My second question is regarding the Australian Immigration policy which has caused some concern to South East Asian Governments including that of Singapore in that it has led to a brain drain from these particular countries.

PRIME MINISTER: Australia supports the framework of consultation which the Five Power Agreement provides. I'm not sure that all the correspondents would be familiar with the Five Power Agreement. It is an arrangement between Singapore, Malaysia, Britain, Australia and New Zealand. We do not believe, however, that it is necessary to have troops from Australia, or for that matter from Britain and New Zealand, stationed in Singapore, or for that matter in Malaysia, in order to preserve the advantages of consultation under the Five Power Agreement. Australia no longer has soldiers in Singapore. It does have some aircraft in Malaysia and we are happy to have those aircraft in Malaysia as long as they serve the purposes of Malaysia as well as Australia. In effect, Malaysia at this stage does not have adequate fighter protection. She has for many years depended on Australia to provide it.

You mention as your second question the position of students from South East Asia in Australia. There have been for the last 25 years many thousands of students from South East Asia studying at Australian universities and also at technical colleges or at boarding schools. Australia believes that this is a contribution which she can make to providing skills for her neighbours, in particular areas where at this stage they do not have sufficient educational institutions themselves. There is no objective by Australia to entice bright students from her neighbours to carry on their careers in Australia. Australia is, however, very happy to make places available in her own quite crowded educational institutions for students from her neighbours where they can't get those forms of training at home.

QUESTION: I'm not only talking about the students but the professional people, some of whom have emigrated to Australia from developing countries like the Philippines and Singapore.

PRIME MINISTER: I think it's not that so many people have come from the neighbour countries to practise their professions in Australia but that many who have gained professional qualifications in Australia have chosen or sought to remain in Australia. If, for instance, we were not to allow those students from South East Asia who had acquired university degrees, namely medicine or engineering, to stay in Australia we would then be accused of pursuing a racist policy. My Government, which came to office 22 months ago tomorrow, has taken the attitude that if people have qualifications which are needed in Australia, they can come to Australia or stay in Australia irrespective of their racial or religious beliefs and, accordingly, there are, it is true, quite a number of doctors in particular who were born in South East Asia and who are now practising in Australia. We can do with many more doctors in Australia than we have. I would be, we believe, an infringement of human rights to say that they can't stay in Australia if they want to. Obviously, their qualifications are acceptable, if they were gained in Australia. Now this has caused some misgivings among some of our neighbours that they went to the expense of providing their primary and secondary education. We provided their tertiary education and then you have the situation - are you to say that they are not to practise their professions in Australia. That they have to go home? That was said by the previous Australian Government. Some of the students, doctors generally, didn't want to go back to the countries of birth so they went to Canada instead. Now that didn't serve Australia. It didn't serve our neighbours.

QUESTION: I'd like to follow up the question about resources. You said in your speech "Yet there remains for the future one of the oldest of all the causes of war - the threat of war for the possession of resources." Well, in my book, land is a resource and a very valuable one and you have about the biggest per capita possession of land in the world. Living space has been a cause of wars for some time as you well remember. What is your policy about letting people, not qualified, not educated but Chinese, Japanese, Indian, who want a place to settle because they're hungry and there isn't enough room where they are?

PRIME MINISTER: It is true that Australia has a very large land mass. It would be one of the, what I suppose, five largest members of the United Nations territorially. Nevertheless, it is the driest country in the world. The average rainfall over the whole of Australia would be lower than that over any comparable land mass in the world. It would just not be possible to readily put under cultivation those parts of Australia which are not already under cultivation. It would not be possible regularly to pasture animals in those parts of Australia where animals are not pastured already. I don't say that there are not very large tracts in Australia which could not be used for agriculture or pasture. I do point out, however, that it would require a very much larger capital expenditure to make them fertile, fruitful, dependable than pretty well any other part of the world. The parts of Australia which are already used for agriculture or pasture are those parts which are comparable to the other parts of the world which are used for agriculture or pasture. People who come to Australia don't want to settle on the land generally. The people who come to Australia in general want to settle in the two very large cities of Sydney and Melbourne.

QUESTION: Sir, on the question of oil, I understand that your Government was not consulted by the United Nations when they opened the campaign here with President Ford's speech. Do you think that the strategy was good, or do you think that they got off on the wrong foot, with this question, what has been your feeling since you've been here about the reactions to the American campaign to get oil prices down?

PRIME MINISTER: I haven't been long enough in the United States to comment appropriately or effectively on the matters you raise. Perhaps I can say that Australia is not as seriously affected by the oil developments of the last 12 months as are, say, some of the industrialised countries such as Germany or France or Britain. I believe also that while the United States' oil reserves are immense and Australia's are quite small, in practice we produce more of the oil - a larger percentage of the oil we use - than does the United States. Australia produces about 70 per cent of the oil she consumes and she will be able to produce that percentage for another ten years. That's the limiting factor, the ten years, and the oil in which we are deficient is largely the heavy oil, the lubricating fuel oil and so on. We are much more fortunately situated in other energy sources than we are in oil. The other point I might make is that Australia is naturally sensitive to the attitude of the developing countries in the use of their resources. Geographically, we bear their attitudes in mind. Geographically, we are not in Western Europe or North America. We are not in the North Atlantic context geographically, we are more akin therefore economically as well as geographically to

other countries, many of them developing countries. We share their aspirations to have a fair price for our products. We would want to see the price we got for our primary and natural products was indexed to what we happened to pay for our necessary imports.

QUESTION: Yesterday, you expressed considerable concern on the question of non-poliferation or poliferation and enumerated certain agreements and initiatives that your Government favoured. You did not perhaps inadvertently or otherwise, mention the Pakistan South Asian Nuclear Free Zone. Could you tell me whether your concern and support extended to the Pakistan initiative and if so does it extend strongly enough for you to vote for the item if it comes up in the General Assembly?

PRIME MINISTER: Our attitude towards the Pakistan proposal is the same as our attitude to the other proposals I listed. I didn't purport to make an exhaustive list. We support the general concept. We support the Pakistan proposal as well as those other ones which I did in fact mention.

QUESTION: Mr Whitlam, you were reported in Australia today as saying that the Australian representative in the Security Council voted for South Africa's expulsion from the United Nations. A spokesman for Senator Willesee has been reported as saying that we have no final position. Could you reconcile the two statements?

PRIME MINISTER: I don't think that I've made any pronouncement on this. I think it would be premature for me to express a view on it. We did of course, as you know, and nearly everybody else did too I suppose, vote for this matter to be considered by the Security Council. We are a member of the Security Council. I wouldn't want to pre-empt the discussions on the Security Council in which of course we shall have to take part.

QUESTION: Mr Whitlam, in your speech yesterday, fairly well down, you mentioned any attempt by any State to bring about political or economic change through clandestine or corrupt methods. You also mentioned about even the most powerful nations can't do this. In this country at the moment Chile is a big story. Were you referring to the United States and what has happened in Chile with the C.I.A.?

PRIME MINISTER: I don't know what the C.I.A. did in Chile or if they did it. I believe there have been instances over the years in which the Soviet Union as well as the United States have sought to guide events in other countries. I hope that that guidance is counter-productive and it is realised to be so.

QUESTION: Will it continue to be your Government's policy to yield to the K.G.B. and return defectors who seek asylum in Australia as you returned the musical genius Mr Ermolenko last August.

PRIME MINISTER: We refused to detain Mr Ermolenko against his will.

QUESTION: You allowed him to be with Mr Kabalevsky for 4½ hours alone during which time it is alleged he changed his mind.

PRIME MINISTER: Mr Ermolenko was for very many hours in the company of people. Australians, people who were not Russians, Russian officials or Russian private citizens. There is no question that Mr Ermolenko wanted to go home. He did express apparently to a couple of Australians the view that he would like to remain in Australia. A day later, no longer, he changed his mind and he kept resolutely for several days to his wish to go home. In those circumstances it would have been a gross infringement of his rights to detain him. No man should be detained against his will.

QUESTION: I apologise if you have already been asked and answered this question - I couldn't come on time. Iran has made some rather sweeping suggestions about the Indian Ocean and asked for Australia's cooperation, what is your reaction...?

PRIME MINISTER: I'm not sure what proposals or reports you have in mind. The Shah of Iran spent 8 days in Australia. He left last Friday. There were wide-ranging discussions between him and his Ministers and me and mine. We welcome the interest that the Shah has shown in the countries to the east of Iran and the countries around the Indian Ocean including our own which is diagonally across it from his country. We believe that this interest by Iran, which has become a very considerable nation under the present Shah, will be beneficial for many other countries around the Indian Ocean.

QUESTION: Have you mentioned in particular the American potential base in Diego Garcia and what is your view on that possibility of a base there? Do you oppose it, are you in favour of it, or do you have no opinion on it?

PRIME MINISTER: I know of no country around the Indian Ocean which has welcomed it.

QUESTION: Just across the street facing this building there was a very large demonstration the other day. The leaflet that was distributed I have here which says your recognition of the incorporation of the Baltic States, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania into the Soviet Union. It goes on to say that the elected representatives, the Senate, in your country has denounced that decision. Do you care to comment on (A) your reaction and (B) the Senate's reaction to it?

PRIME MINISTER: You said a very large demonstration. I was told there was going to be one but I had to look very hard yesterday to see anyone. Perhaps I should point out that in Australia the Senate doesn't have the status that it has, for instance, in the United States. In Australia we have a system inherited from Great Britain - the Parliament of Westminster. Accordingly the Government is composed of that party or those parties which have a majority in the House of Representatives, which we call ours, just as the British Government is composed of that party or parties with a majority in the House of Commons. Foreign policy is determined in Australia, as in Britain or Canada or New Zealand or India - other countries which have the British Parliamentary system - by the Governments. It is not determined by the Parliament, still less by the Senate, in our case, the House of Lords in Britain's case. Accordingly, the

Government determines matters of foreign policy and the Government in Australia - the Australian Labor Party - which has a majority in the House of Representatives. Now what my Government has done is to recognise the de jure, the incorporation of the Republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in the Soviet Union. The historical fact is that these three countries have been, except for the years between the First and Second World Wars, parts of Russia. Lithuania has, except for those years between the two wars, been part of Russia since Catherine the Great. Estonia and Latvia have, except those years between the two world wars, been parts of Russia since Peter the Great. And, before that, they were parts of Sweden since the days of Gustavus Adolphus. Now I know that in Australia, to a certain extent, as in North America, both the U.S. and Canada, that there are migrants from those countries who pursue the proposition that they should be separate independent states. They won't become separate independent states unless there is a world war which the Soviet Union lost. Now there are two particular points I would like to make about this. It produces unnecessary tensions in Australia, maybe also in the United States or in Canada, for people to pursue this mirage of a separate statehood - independent sovereign statehood - for Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Some people pursue the same attitude in Australia about Croatia. Now the fact is that in the case of Croatia all of us have recognised Yugoslavia ever since 1918. None of us have ever recognised a separate state of Croatia except Hitler's Germany and Mussolini's Italy in 1941, 42, 43 and 44. Now so much for the attitude of people who have settled overseas in countries like Australia. It is a divisive policy to encourage the belief that there may be separate states again. I come to the attitude of people in those countries themselves. It maybe that some would again like them to be independent sovereign states. I bear in mind, however, that there was a great deal of encouragement by radio, particularly, and maybe by pamphlets, stirring up people who wanted to have a change of Government in East Germany or in Poland or Hungary or in Czechoslovakia, and there were a very great number of disappointed persons afterwards as a result of the riots in Stettin or Warsaw or Budapest in the early and middle fifties, or in Czechoslovakia in the time of Dubjcek in 1969. It is a deception to believe that countries which could not assist East Germany or Poland or Hungary or Czechoslovakia in the early or middle fifties or in 1969 would lift a finger to help in Estonia, Latvia or Lithuania. There are also some humanitarian considerations which led to the recognition de jure of the incorporation. Russia is a federal state. As long as Australia had diplomatic relations with Moscow on the basis of the pre or the inter-war boundaries, Australia could only make representations on behalf of people living in Australia to the Federal Government in Moscow. It could not make representations on what in the U.S. or Australia would be called state matters. It couldn't make representations to the republic governments in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania about matters which fall within their jurisdiction.

QUESTION: Australia had been until last year a staunch supporter of South Korea on the Korean question in the United Nations. Since then you have established diplomatic relations with North Korea. I wonder what your position would be this year?

PRIME MINISTER: At the General Assembly a year ago there was a consensus to defer consideration of the Korean question. For the first time the Assembly was not forced to a vote on this question. The general view seemed to be that it would be desirable to encourage the two governments in the Korean Peninsula to settle their differences and to give away the prospect of confrontation. The Australian Government applauded this change of attitude. It therefore worked very patiently but steadily towards the situation where we could have diplomatic relations with both those governments. Of course, we don't presume to say what our attitude is territorially on the claims by the two governments. We don't do that in Germany, we don't do it in Vietnam, we don't do it in Korea, but we believe these governments are both securely in power. It is therefore desirable for us to have diplomatic relations with both of them. Australia now has diplomatic relations with all the governments between Australia and the North Pole - all of them. By diplomatic relations we don't say that we approve the nature of any government, we merely say we accept its credentials, we believe it proper to have official relations with them. We naturally hope that the relations between the two governments in the Korean Peninsula will become less strident than they have often been.

QUESTION: Mr Whitlam, can you explain why you are going to Nashville?

PRIME MINISTER: Come along with me and see.

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