

JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE
 GIVEN BY THE AUSTRALIAN PRIME MINISTER, MR. E.G. WHITLAM
 AND PRIME MINISTER OF THE NETHERLANDS, MR. J.M. DEN UYL,
 IN THE HAGUE, 6 JANUARY 1975

Well, Ladies and Gentlemen, our Australian friends are very short of time, therefore we will immediately start and make your questions very short.

DEN UYL: Well only a very few introductory remarks as to have as much time as possible for Mr. Whitlam and your questions. Let me say how very glad we are to have the opportunity to have this exchange of thoughts. We dealt with the position of Australia in the world, the position of Holland in the European community the way Australia looks upon the European community and the role of Holland in it, questions of co-operation in development aid and in the relation, of course, the policies towards Indonesia. And besides that we dealt with a number of bilateral questions. Well, I would think that is enough introduction and I would like Mr. Whitlam to put forward a few introductory remarks.

WHITLAM: You will see from what the Prime Minister has said the range of matters which we discussed. It has been a very fruitful weekend and the Prime Minister, his wife too, may I say, and his Ministers and his officials have spent very many hours with the Australian party. It has been very easy for us to exchange views because our countries are exceptionally similar. Sure we are remote in geography, we are disparate in size, but we have the same population, we have the same average income, we are among the most highly industrialised countries in the world, we are among the largest trading countries in the world and of course the Governments are fraternal ones. Six years ago I was in the Netherlands and met Mr. Den Uyl for the first time and we since have become Prime Minister at the same time.

DEN UYL: I became so just a few months after the elections.

WHITLAM: Your election system is confusing to other people and ours is confusing to other people. Your election took place some days before ours in 1972, but it took some months to achieve a decision as to who was to be Prime Minister.

Last May we had an election and it was three months before we knew who were to be the members of the Parliament. So it is indicative of the stress under which all western societies, even those with the benefit of social democrat Governments, Labour these days. It has been a very fruitful weekend and since the Netherlands makes a quite exceptionally disproportionate contribution to the EEC, the OECD, to International bodies in general. It has been valuable to us not only for the understanding of the world as a whole and particularly of the countries with which we compare ourselves. So thank you very much for what you have done in the party, in the Government, among officials, over Friday, Saturday, Sunday and now Monday.

QUESTION: Were any decisions taken during the negotiations during the weekend?

DEN UYL: You might not call them decisions, because we did not have a particular agenda on which to negotiate but we made some appointments on wider consultations, on migration problems, on co-operation and development fields, on questions of uranium, and the ultracentrifuge installations we have in Holland - just appointments for wide a prolonged consultations.

QUESTIONS: Mr. Prime Minister, there is a quite big rumour that there is a big contract for Australia selling uranium to either the EEC. (Sic). What is true about this rumour and is Holland interested in uranium or what?

WHITLAM: As I understand this situation the EEC cannot collectively enter in to contracts concerning uranium. Obviously the Australians will be discussing the general situation of uranium in each of the EEC countries they visit and we will be visiting half a dozen of them. Any specific contracts have to be made with individual countries as things stand at the moment. Nevertheless the development of Australia's vert great uranium resources - it is believed we posses one-fifth of the proven uranium resources in the world - the development of these is a matter of international concern and negotiation because Australia does not have the technology and Australia by herself does not have the capital to develop these resources as far as

they have to be developed and as far as we would like them to be developed in Australia. The Netherlands is associated with Britain and West Germany - I have already visited Britain and I shall be visiting West Germany - in one particular process for enriching uranium. Very naturally Australia and Japan, which are conducting a feasibility study into the question of enriching Australia's uranium, will be interested in the attitude of these three countries which have this particular process.

QUESTION: There were no appointments made about selling uranium to the Netherlands?

WHITLAM: There were no contracts made, no, no, no.

QUESTION: Prime Minister was there any specific discussion on provision of technology?

WHITLAM: The provision of technology was very obviously one of the matters discussed.

QUESTION: Mr. Prime Minister we understand that you discussed the need for Great Britain to stay in the Common Market. Can you elaborate on that in any way please?

WHITLAM: I do not want to give the impression that I would be telling the British what they should do and I am sure my colleague does not wish to give that impression either. But nevertheless it is relevant for Australia to express her attitude about Britain's membership of the community since traditionally Britain was Australia's biggest trading partner. She is by no means Australia's biggest trading partner now. We look at questions of trade these days in terms of the Community and the Community is the largest trading partner of Australia now. I can say that there is no possible advantage, in the Australian Government's view, in Britain leaving the Community. Previous Australian Governments may have given that impression. I fear they did give that impression not only in Britain when the Conservatives and Labor has sought to join the Community, but they also gave that impression among the six who then constituted the Community. They gave the impression that

Australia resented Britain joining the Community and they gave the impression that they wanted to frustrate any such accession by Britain and now my Government takes no such attitude and certainly should leave no such impression. There is in our view no possible advantage to Australia in Britain leaving the Community. I suppose I can go further and say that these days so many things depend on international co-operation. It is absurd for the west to be so divided as it is. We are in our social and economic and political habits in Australia, a western country, and we believe it strengthens our sort of societies, the mixed economies - the hitherto affluent countries of the world, the countries which trade and manufacture - for them to work together. Accordingly, I suppose, I hope it is not regarded as too much out of place that we believe that the west in general will be much stronger, happier, more effective if it works together. And that includes Britain working with her neighbours on the continent.

DEN UYL: May I add one word to what Mr Whitlam said about Britain. It was rather peculiar to discover that I would think that there are hardly any other countries in the world that would be so eager to see Britain within the European Community than Australia and the Netherland. That was our experience of discussing these affairs.

QUESTION: Could I reverse that question - in other words would you .. that Australia might be worse off if Britain were to leave the Common Market?

WHITLAM: I do not want to speculate on whether Britain will leave the Common Market. I cannot tell what would happen if she did.

QUESTION: Mr. Prime Minister, changing the subject somewhat, we are in a part of the world which particularly felt the effects of the Arab oil embargo and which has felt the effects of the increase in oil prices. Can you spell out here Australia's attitude to American initiatives for an oil-sharing scheme and also can you tell us now whether Australia will attend the conference of consuming nations which America proposes?

WHITLAM: Well no arrangements have been made yet. Obviously I have discussed in each of the European countries I visited this general question, that is, the possibility of disrupting the whole infra-structure upon which trading countries have relied up till now and the access to resources. Australia's situation is not entirely the same as that of western Europe. Quite obviously that must be the case because we do have ample energy resources ourselves in general and we are situated on the other side of the oil-rich lands.

QUESTION: Do you have any other...

WHITLAM: No I will not elaborate at this stage.

QUESTION: Mr. Prime Minister, can I ask a question on immigration? I was talking to Dr. Moss Cass, Minister for the Environment and Conservation. He said zero population was for the time being the policy of Australia because that would give an example on how to keep population down on the planet, while Mr. Tom Uren said the one percent population increase was his policy, but the one percent population increase, as the average is 1.9, cancels out the 0.8 percent increase in immigration. Has any commitment been made during your visit? Did you discuss the question or can you give any information on the immigration policy as far as the Dutch...

WHITLAM: I will not respond to your kind references to my colleagues. My practice is not to comment in terms of what other people are reported or thought to have said. So I therefore overlook what you said them. You will accept that I hope with good grace. Now on the question of immigration - that is, you asking my views. Well, that is fair enough. There has been a diminution in migration from western Europe since the 1950's. There have been for very many years now migrants from, say, the Netherlands to Australia. There are about 160,000 people in Australia who migrated from the Netherlands, but most of them came in earlier years. With increasing prosperity and security in western Europe we have found that the number of people from the Netherlands and other western European countries has declined.

Most of the migrants to Australia now come from Southern Europe - from Italy, and Malta, Yugoslavia, Greece, Cyprus. There has been a reduction in the target of migrants which the Australian Government has sought. The immediate reason for that has been the extent of unemployment in Australia. It is no kindness to the people coming to Australia or the people who are already there, to have people competing for too few jobs. Also there is probably an overall situation: migrants particularly in the last ten years or so, have settled in Sydney and Melbourne which are already growing too much. And furthermore we were finding the Australia was losing a great number of migrants because Australia's social services, health service, housing facilities, were not as good as those for instance in western Europe. Our social services can't compete with those of the Netherlands although they have been improved immensely in the two years of my Government. And furthermore we have now made the payment of social services to people who have earned them in Australia available to them anywhere in the world. In the Netherlands particularly, we found that there were a great number of people who had worked and settled very happily in Australia but as they became older, decided to retire in the Netherlands because the social services were very much better. Our prime objective now is to make people who have migrated Australia or people who from now on migrate to Australia happy in Australia. And while we are bringing fewer migrants to Australia the number of migrants who are staying is very much larger. The net gain is as great as it used to be and the number of people becoming naturalised as Australian citizens has almost doubled in the two years that we have been a government. We are now concentrating on the migration of people who have relatives in Australia or who have skills for which there is an un-fulfilled demand in Australia. Some figures I notice have been quoted in the Netherlands of the reduced numbers of migrants - those figures are an extrapolation of a small period. They are greatly exaggerated.

QUESTION: Can we expect the Australian dollar to align with one of the stronger European currencies in the months ahead?

WHITLAM: You don't find Heads of Governments commenting on matters of currency but our alignment is with a basket of currencies among which of course are some European ones. Roughly the basket is proportionate to the extent of our trade with the various countries concerned.

QUESTION: (Indistinct, but about discussions in Paris)

WHITLAM: Well this obviously should wait until I have spoken with the French. Our general attitude has been up till now that it is proper for us to make arrangements for the disposal of uranium with those countries which accept the IAEA safeguards.

QUESTION: In answer to my earlier question you clearly said that uranium technology had been discussed, And I asked you if in fact there had been a specific offer of technology Could you answer that?

WHITLAM: There was an exchange of views on it. I mentioned earlier that the Netherlands is involved with two other countries - the West Germans and the British - in one particular form of enrichment. And as you know the Head of the Australian Department of Minerals and Energy has been visiting the site and holding discussions himself there.

QUESTION: Mr. Den Uyl, would the Netherlands have reservations about Japan being tied in with Australia as far as any uranium deal is concerned because of Japan's constitutional position whereby it is not allowed to withhold secrets from the public?

DEN UYL: Well, it is one of the points which should be considered if consultations proceed and we would have to consider any agreement. But what is happening now is just as Mr. Whitlam already pointed out, that we are looking at possibilities.

QUESTION: Can I ask a question about dominance in the Indian Ocean and the change of the strategic centre in the world from western Europe towards the Indian Ocean. You want Diego Garcia

not to be included in the security system of the United States but by now, as the order becomes more contented, even Dr. Kissinger is talking about not taking the Arab oil fields. Does Australia feel that the whole strategic situation is changing and is tis cabinet adjusting its position?

WHITLAM: There again, do you mind if I take the same attitude in you comments on Dr. Kissinger as I took on your comments about Dr. Cass and Mr. Uren. This may be your technique, it is not mine, Now you asked me quite legitmately about the Indian Ocean and about Diego Garcia. It is not the wish of the Australian Government not of any government in the Indian Ocean that there should be a confrontation or escalation by the United States and the Soviet Union in the Indian Ocean or anywhere. But of course, you ask about the Indian Ocean. We don't want the Indian Ocean, which has been ahppily free of this super power rivalry, to become the centre of it.

QUESTION: But didnt you in the United States especially talk about having your own self-realisation and that it does not only mean not having a confrontation between the Great Powers byt having a say of your own.

WHITLAM: I have in the United Nationsand my foreign minister has in the United Nations supported the various proposals to have a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean. That is the attitude that my Government takes and it is the attitude which all the countries around and in the Indian Ocean also take.

QUESTION: Obviously a lot of your talks so far have contained a lot of discussion on the world economy. Could you tell us how you see the short and long term future and how you think European countries are going to fare in the next twelve months?

WHITLAM: The universal feeling in the countries I visited has been and the reports that they give me of the feeling in the other countries of western Europe is that of the two great evils which beset us all to an unexpected and unprecedented extent - inflation and recession- the latter is the greater threat to our society and our economy. And they are of course doing what they

can to reduce the inflation but they are more worried immediately about the recession.

QUESTION: Are they pessimistic?

WHITLAM: They are apprehensive but not pessimistic. Obviously one hopes that the efforts which we are all making will succeed. Speaking for myself, I think they will.

QUESTION: Mr. Whitlam, is it the view of the European leaders you have spoken to so far the President Ford has accepted bad advice and exaggerated the problem of recession? If so, do you agree with them or not?

WHITLAM: The general feeling, if I may say so, has been that the advice that President Ford had been receiving had been contrary to the feeling which I have just stated as being that of the western Europeans. But I would not presume to say what advice the President is now receiving or taking. There seems to be some feeling that the advice which he was given and was known to have been given earlier might not be accepted by him and the Congress.

QUESTION: Mr. Dne Uyl, have you made any specific arrangements on migration or has there been any proposal?

DEN UYL: Mr. Whitlam pointed out Australian migration policies. For our part we have stressed the significance that Dutch emigration to Australia could be continued and we have underlined that there are some aspects of present Australian migration policies that stress in particular the entry conditions - being relatives or having special qualifications. There might be some points which would be worthwhile to discuss further, as spontaneous emigration always has played a great part in the Netherlands. But our feeling is that by having consultations in this field there are real prospects for emigration being as it was in recent years.

QUESTION: Can you be more specific on this point?

DEN UYL: No.

QUESTION: Mr. Whitlam have you felt like a farmer who took a holiday and had his barn catch fire because of what has happened in Darwin and now Tasmania? What is your feeling about this and does it strike you as something to marvel at?

WHITLAM: Well the thought had not occurred to me.

QUESTION: The OECD I believe has decided to jointly remain open for trade and capital movement. But I believe Australia has not as yet signed this agreement. Is there any reason why they have not?

WHITLAM: The general question of investment is being considered by us and some aspects of it such as double taxation agreements have been discussed in most of the countries we visited.

QUESTION: Mr. Den Uyl, has any decision been made about uranium?

DEN UYL: You know that in the project for producing the technique of enrichment for uranium by ultra centrifuge you need to have uranium to have the process realised commercially so at any time the three countries which are co-operating in the project will need uranium.

QUESTION: (indistinct)

DEN UYL: I cannot make statements at this moment on the amount we need or about the time at which we will need uranium but the so-called troika, the three countries co-operating in the project will need uranium, that is quite sure.

QUESTION: A domestic question. Have you been advised what caused the Hobart tragedy? What action are you prepared to take?

WHITLAM: I sent a cable to Mr. Reece, the Premier of Tasmania, I suppose twelve hours ago and I got a, I received a message of thanks from him. Now you have the text I think. I expect there will be an inquiry into how such a ludicrous happening took place. It's beyond my imagination how any competent person could steer

a ship into the pylons of a bridge, and But I have to restrain myself because I would expect the person responsible for such an act would find himself before a criminal jury. There is no possibility of a Government guarding against mad or incompetent captains of ships or pilots or aircraft.
