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PRIME MINISTER

FOR PRESS

4 July 1976

JAKARTA

I have instructed our Ambassador in Jakarta to pass a message to President Soeharto in which I repeated to him the great importance which I attach to Australia's relations with Indonesia and assured him of the respect I have for him personally and for his leadership of Indonesia.

I took this step because of possible misunderstandings arising out of press reports, some of them inaccurate, which referred to my recent talks in Peking.

The Ambassador saw President Soeharto on Saturday morning. As well as handing over my personal message to the President he gave some background to the President on the brief references to Indonesia and South East Asia in my talks with the Chinese Premier in Peking.

President Soeharto asked the Ambassador to convey to me his warmest regards and his appreciation that the misunderstandings resulting from reports in the press on this matter had now been dispelled.

The President told the Ambassador that Indonesia also attached great importance to its relations with Australia.

I am looking forward to a full exchange of views with President Soeharto when I visit Indonesia at a mutually convenient time, probably next October.

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