

## INTERVIEW WITH PETER HARVEY

## AT FAIRBAIRN

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QUESTION: Prime Minister, why the need for <sup>the</sup> two Boeing 727's.

PRIME MINISTER: The basic need is on the grounds of security, that's been very strongly put to me over recent days. When I first became Prime Minister it was indicated that it was alright to travel on commercial aircraft so long as proper precautions were taken. People were much happier travelling Qantas and other airlines. Qantas doesn't travel through every route that one needs to go to and over the last couple of years there has been an increasing concern for security and as you know the number of incidents around the world have been fairly marked. It is not a question of a Prime Minister's security so much, or I don't think it is, but also the additional risk which you place on other passengers who are in an aircraft and that again has been expressed very strongly. Sir Robert Mark had some elements of this in his own general report on security. As a result of that, I asked for technical evaluation again from our own security people and while much of that can't become public because its outlining the nature of the threat and what people do, or could do to put a flight or a person in danger in travel. I think Mr. Killen has tabled a document which is bringing all this together and a very hard recommendation that the Government ought to take some action. Now, you can say aren't there aircraft? Well the aircraft we are standing beside is not a long-range aircraft. It can't travel overseas with any degree of satisfaction. Its a twin engine aircraft and its single engine performance is poor to say the best. It was a good aircraft for what it was originally bought, but it won't do the longer range job and it hasn't got the inbuilt security that you need with three engines. I was very reluctant and always have been very reluctant about this particular matter, but ultimately I have had to accept that the grounds of security in 1978 and beyond are overwhelming. I suppose on two grounds -- the safety of a head of government and whatever, whoever, might be travelling with him, but also to avoid putting at risk other passengers who travel by normal commercial means on a normal commercial flight.

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