

PRIME MINISTERS STATEMENT  
TO TELEVISION CAMERAS

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I am quite certain that all Australians will deplore the barbaric murder of Aldo Moro, one of the most distinguished political leaders from Italy. He has been a great leader and his assassination, his murder, his kidnapping, comes at a time when he had been seeking through the democratic process to seek some kind of consensus within the Italian community and nation.

This is another serious attack at the heart of the democratic process, at the heart of a democratic society and I am quite certain that all Australians join me in offering their sorrow and deepest sympathy to the whole Italian people--to the Italian nation.

The plague of terrorist activity must be opposed with all the vigour at our command and countries in support of a peaceful way of a democratic process need to reinforce each other in making sure that opportunities available to terrorists are minimised to the maximum extent possible. There is no excuse for this kind of action anywhere in any society and least of all is there any excuse in a democratic society which from its very nature leaves open the possibility of reform and change through peaceful processes.

Democratic nations need to reinforce each other in opposition to terrorism. The Australian Government's view in these particular matters has been very firmly expressed. It was a monstrous act, one of the worst acts that we have seen in a very long time, and again, on behalf of the Australian Government and people I would like to offer the sympathy and sorrow to all the people of Italy.

QUESTION: Prime Minister, was the Italian Government right not to do a deal with the terrorists?

PRIME MINISTER: If you had read, or if you re-read, the first Menzies Lecture at Monash University when I spoke about terrorism, you will see there that I was stating policy because we believe that you can't compromise with terrorism. You can try and do a deal but the end might be the same and if terrorism is to be defeated, the terrorists need to understand that there will be no compromise.

QUESTION: Mr. Fraser, if you had been captured in a terrible situation like that, and were sending letters to the Party, the Government and things, would you expect the Australian nation, through its representatives, to ignore those letters which might have been under duress?

PRIME MINISTER: I don't think it's a question of ignore. I think any nation would be doing what it possibly could to secure the safety and freedom of a person who had been kidnapped. That doesn't mean to say that you would compromise other people in whatever arrangements are made. You've got the normal processes of your security forces and your police who would be obviously enquiring and seeking to secure the freedom and safety of a person in that position.

QUESTION: You wouldn't expect to buy a compromise for yourself?

PRIME MINISTER: For myself at the price of other people? I think it would be wrong.

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