



File

MR YEEND

PRIME MINISTER

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INDIA-AUSTRALIA JOINT PRESS STATEMENT

The Rt. Hon. Malcolm Fraser, Prime Minister of Australia, is paying a visit to India for nine days from 25 January to 2 February, 1979. During his stay he has called on the President of India, Shri Neelam Sanjiva Reddy. Discussions have been held between Mr. Fraser and the Prime Minister of India, Shri Morarji Desai, the two Deputy Prime Ministers of India and other Cabinet Ministers.

The discussions covered a wide range of international and regional issues as well as the further development of bilateral relations between India and Australia. The talks, which took place in a spirit of utmost cordiality and understanding, were very valuable.

The two Prime Ministers took pleasure in recalling their earlier meetings and discussions, particularly at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Regional Meeting in Sydney in February 1978, which had helped to bring the two countries closer together. The two Prime Ministers felt that their countries had many interests in common and that it would be to their mutual advantage further to build in practical ways on the close ties already existing between their peoples and governments.

The discussions identified ways in which the relationship between India and Australia could be developed further. Officials from the two countries will be discussing the practical basis for further cooperation, particularly in science, technology, trade, energy and related areas.

The two Prime Ministers expressed their satisfaction at the advantages to be derived from membership of the Commonwealth. They expressed the hope that this institution would prove increasingly useful as a forum for mutual cooperation and they recalled with satisfaction the cooperation already achieved among the countries of the region.

The two Prime Ministers considered the international situation in depth. They noted that there were areas of grave concern as well as of positive satisfaction on the world scene. Among the subjects on which the discussions particularly focussed were the situation in South Asia and the neighbouring countries, South East Asia and the Indian Ocean.

Both Prime Ministers agreed that there was an urgent need today for both aligned and non-aligned countries to find positive ways to reduce tensions. This should not be left to the super-powers alone. They re-affirmed that India and Australia from their respective positions - India as a member of the non-aligned movement and Australia as an aligned country - could play a useful role in promoting peace and stability by advocating responsible attitudes and constructive solutions to world problems.

It was recognised that the two countries had different historical and cultural backgrounds but shared democratic experience and a common belief that differences could be resolved if there were consideration for the views of others and a genuine desire to seek out common objectives and grounds for agreement. Because of their respective and distinct positions, further developing their relations and working together more closely would help in creating an atmosphere conducive to cooperation rather than confrontation among nations.

The Prime Ministers recorded their determination to strengthen the warm relationship between their two countries and also their intention to advocate and pursue the cause of moderation.

The Prime Minister of Australia expressed his sincere appreciation of the warm welcome and hospitality received by him and his family during this visit. He extended an invitation to the Prime Minister of India to visit Australia. The invitation was accepted with pleasure.

During his stay in New Delhi, the Prime Minister of Australia was the chief guest at the Republic Day celebrations in the capital. He left New Delhi on 29 January, 1979, to visit Pantnagar, Chandigarh, Udaipur and Bombay. He is accompanied by Mrs. Fraser and three of their children and by senior officials of the Australian Government.