



SOVIET EXPANSIONISM MUST BE RESISTED

(Extract from an address by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Trade and Resources, the Rt Hon. J.D. Anthony, M.P., at the Wine Industry Field Day organised by the Hunter Valley Vineyard Association and the N.S.W. Department of Agriculture at Rothbury Estate, Pokolbin - Friday, 18th January, 1980.

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One of the things that has been very much on the Government's mind in the last few days has been our relations with the Soviet Union.

Trade between Australia and the Soviet Union is getting to the point where it runs about 70 to one in our favour. To some people, this might be the over-riding consideration.

There's no need for me here to go through all the implications for our relationship of current events in Afghanistan - except to say that the Government is very deeply concerned about what has happened in that country, and about the course of events in the future.

What this fresh focussing of interest on the Soviet Union does is remind us that there are ways of life and systems of government very different from our own.

We are reminded that our people and our industries exist and operate under regimes that differ vastly from those of some other countries.

Our agriculture, for example, is affected quite directly not only by the weather, but by the economic and political systems under which it exists.

In free-enterprise societies like ours, people know that they can apply their skills and their initiative, use their capital and their physical strength, to embark on enterprises which, if they succeed, will bring them rewards of many kinds.

They know they are free to take risks, to be stimulated by the incentive of likely rewards.

But in a country like the Soviet Union, things are very different - and we ought to remember that they're different.

Certainly Russia's harsh climate is a big burden on its agricultural industries, but I think the Soviet Union's political and economic system is an important factor in that country's failure to keep pace with the western nations in agricultural and other development.

From what I've seen in the Soviet Union, and from my reading, I've gained the impression that the Soviet system of socialism is the fundamental cause of the sluggishness, the ponderousness, the inefficiency of the Soviet economy.

One shudders to think how the wine industry's enterprising moves into the development of the tourist business might have fared under the inadequacies and stultifying influence of a Soviet-style system.

The point I'm making today is that the Soviet system comes out very badly in a comparison with our own.

We have a political and economic system, and a way of life, that are worth safeguarding.

We have a responsibility to do whatever we can to resist the efforts of the Soviet Union to impose its will on others.

We must understand that the Soviet Union is determined to expand its influence and its control - and its inefficient system.

These ambitions clearly are reaching into the regions of the world of which we are part, and we cannot ignore what is happening.

We face greatly changed international circumstances as the Soviet Union pursues its aims, and Australia must do all it can to prepare itself to respond to those changed circumstances as sensibly and realistically as it can.