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PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

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OPENING OF THE DELEGATION OF THE COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

It certainly is a memorable occasion to be here at the opening of this particular office. We regard it as an important event in relations between the European Community and Australia.

I and my colleagues are honoured to participate in it. It is a landmark in Australian-Community relations, and in one sense I suppose it has indirectly flown from original discussions with Roy Jenkins three or four years ago. As I understand it, it is unusual to have a European Community delegation accredited to one particular country. We are privileged and delighted that that is so with us.

The Australian-Community relationship is important. It affects millions of people, both in Europe and Australia. There has in some areas been a rapid growth in the relationship. There was a European Parliamentary delegation here in March of last year. We achieved a nuclear safeguards agreement with Euratom, and that obviously paved the way for uranium exports. There are now regular Australian-European Community consultations, and these are regarded as very important indeed. Your Presidential visit here is something that we welcome very greatly; the opportunity for plain and frank discussions, but friendly discussions nonetheless. That is very much welcomed and we hope that this is just the first of future visits that will take place.

It is obvious that we seek to establish better understanding, wider consultation, and not just in matters that affect Australia and the Community and in very important but perhaps somewhat narrower times in the area of trade. We have discussed at different times the North/South questions, the question of aid, and with arrangements that have been set up, the discussions that the Foreign Minister has been involved in concerning Poland and Western response to Poland, and in many other matters, these are all regarded as an important part of a broader relationship.

The countries that make up the Community, and Australia, have in many important ways the same objectives; their democracies, common ideals and the role that individuals should play in society, we want peace, we want stability, we want to be able to look after ourselves, and I think we all recognise that if we are to achieve those objectives there are wider obligations that we all have to accept. Whether those are obligations in relation to trade and the way we deal with trading partners, or whether they are obligations in relation to political matters, for example, participation of a number of European countries in the Sinai force together with Australia and New Zealand and the United States, we are working basically for the same objectives, to enable our own

people to lead out their lives as they would want, and in peace. It is vastly important for the European Community to be strong, united and outward-looking. More than once in this century events in Europe have dragged the whole world into a world war. I think within Europe that it is somewhat unlikely that that would occur again. But if you look around the world, there are events in the Middle East or Indochina or in other places that could involve Europe in major difficulties. I do not think it is always adequately understood in Europe that just as in the past European events embroiled the whole world, now events wider afield could embroil Europe. That is one of the reasons again, why we welcome this particular permanent mission, this delegation, because the more attention the Commission, the Community, or individual European countries can pay to events outside of Europe, the more secure I think the world will be.

The trade issues between us are obviously vastly important. The European Community earns about \$7 billion a year in Australia and we are delighted that they have an opportunity to earn a profit. The balance of trade favours the European Community by about \$1½ billion each year. We would obviously be looking forward to any opportunity to redress that particular balance. I know there are two arguments that are put in this context; that if you have an unfavourable with somebody, they always say, ah, but you must not deal with these things on a bilateral basis, these questions are multilateral, and then they will try and point around to see with whom you have a trade surplus. Say, for example, your trade surplus with Japan is because of your trade deficit with Europe. That has not actually been said and it might be a slightly long bow, but it just instances the nature of the argument. But I find in many other areas, the United States for example argues that the bilateral trade balance with Japan is something that is very difficult and should not necessarily be endured and needs redressing. So if other countries argue to allow the bilateral point, I think we ought to be allowed to as occasion allows.

But, I do not want to make this just a trade discussion because there are matters that we have of mutual concern and mutual interest. Mr. President, we welcome your presence here very much indeed and we are very glad that you are here for the opening of this particular office. You have spoken in constructive ways about the future relationship. I hope this office enables us to build upon that.