



PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

WEDNESDAY, 14 JULY 1982

VISIT OF USS GOLDSBOROUGH

Attached are copies of correspondence between the Premier of Victoria, Mr John Cain and myself concerning the visit to Melbourne of the United States naval vessel, USS Goldsborough.

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MESSAGE NO: 1691
12.7.82

TO: THE RT. HONBLE. J. M. FRASER, CH, MP, PRIME MINISTER OF
THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA, DEPT. OF THE PRIME MINISTER AND
CABINET, CANBERRA.

MY DEAR PRIME MINISTER,

I HAVE SEEN MEDIA REPORTS THAT A VISIT BY THE USS
GOLDSBOROUGH IS PLANNED FOR MELBOURNE IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

I HAVE ALSO SEEN REPORTS IN WHICH YOU ARE REPORTED TO HAVE
SAID THAT THE VISIT OF SUCH VESSELS IS NOT THE CONCERN OF STATE
GOVERNMENTS. THE VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT IS CONCERNED TO PROTECT
VICTORIANS FROM THE DANGERS OF NUCLEAR CONTAMINATION AND IN
THAT CONTEXT VISITS BY NUCLEAR-POWERED OR NUCLEAR-ARMED WARSHIPS
TO VICTORIA FROM ANY COUNTRY ARE NOT WELCOME. IF IT IS TO BE
YOUR POSITION THAT YOU WILL NOT SEEK TO ENQUIRE IF ANY VESSEL
MIGHT CARRY NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND THERE IS ANY DEGREE OF PROBAB-
ILITY THAT IT WOULD, IT SHOULD BE NECESSARY TO ASSUME THAT IT
WOULD CARRY NUCLEAR WEAPONS.

THE VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT RECOGNISES HOWEVER, THAT THE
COMMONWEALTH HAS ULTIMATE AUTHORITY IN THESE MATTERS AND SO
WOULD NOT PREVENT SUCH VISITS. SHOULD THE COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT
AGREE TO A REQUEST FROM A FOREIGN POWER FOR A VISIT IN THIS CAT-
EGORY, THE COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT MUST ASSUME FULL
RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE SAFETY, ENVIRONMENTAL AND FINANCIAL
ASPECTS OF SUCH VISITS.

I WOULD APPRECIATE DETAILS OF ANY VISITS BY WARSHIPS
WHICH HAVE BEEN PLANNED AS I BELIEVE VICTORIANS ARE ENTITLED
TO BE FULLY INFORMED OF THE DETAILS OF THESE VISITS AND THE
ARRANGEMENTS THE COMMONWEALTH WILL MAKE TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF
ALL VICTORIANS.

JOHN CAIN,
PREMIER OF VICTORIA



PRIME MINISTER

CANBERRA

14 JUL 1982

Dear Mr Cain,

In your teleprinter message of 12 July 1982, you state that "visits by nuclear-powered or nuclear-armed warships from any country are not welcome". I can only express surprise that you continue to pursue such a policy in the face of the decisions taken at the ALP General Conference only last week and in the face of your recognition of the Commonwealth's Constitutional position.

Your message contains several misconceptions which I should rectify.

First, the USS Goldsborough is an Adams class destroyer, very similar to HMA ships Brisbane, Hobart and Perth. It is conventionally powered, not nuclear powered.

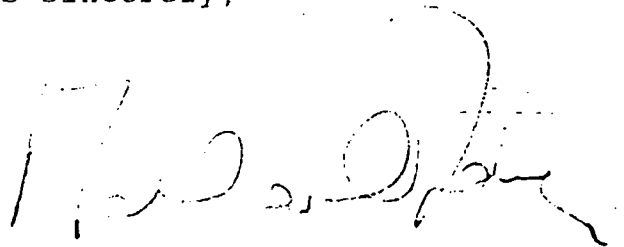
Second, you characterise the Commonwealth Government's position as one of not seeking to enquire if any vessel might carry nuclear weapons. That is not so. The Commonwealth Government's position is that it endorses the policy of our allies of neither confirming nor denying the carriage of nuclear weapons. As I pointed out in my message of 3 June 1982, to identify which warships might carry nuclear weapons would have implications not only for the security of our allies' forces but also for the effectiveness of deterrence. Consequently, as I pointed out in my message of 4 June 1982, one cannot assume that warships of our nuclear weapon state allies are not nuclear armed.

Third, your reference to the dangers of "nuclear contamination" implies that Victorians are being exposed to unacceptable risks. That is not so. The risk of a reactor incident in nuclear powered warships is very remote. The risk of a nuclear weapon malfunction is even more remote. The smallness of these risks notwithstanding, appropriate precautions are always taken.

Fourth, I do not understand your reference to the "financial aspects" of visits by allies' warships. The major costs associated with such visits are met by the government of the nation whose warship makes the visit. The financial benefits to the State deriving from port visits far exceed such incidental costs as the State may incur.

You also requested details of planned visits by warships: Apart from the visit of USS Goldsborough on 5-9 August the Australian Government is unaware of any other visits at present. Your Government will be advised of future visits through normal channels. I assume that arrangements for the USS Goldsborough, and any other vessels in the future, will accord with those that have normally been made for Allied warships visiting the Port of Melbourne.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Malcolm Fraser', written in a cursive style.

(Malcolm Fraser)

The Hon. J. Cain, M.L.A.,
Premier of Victoria,
MELBOURNE VIC 3000