

DOORSTOP, PARLIAMENT HOUSE - HMS INVINCIBLE

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Question

What are the options now that the Invincible purchase is not on?

Prime Minister

I will have to have a talk with Ian Sinclair when he gets back.

Question

Are we likely to talk to the Americans about a replacement vessel?

Prime Minister

We will be seeking advice obviously from the Department of Defence and defence advisers, and we will have to see what the options are. It is not surprising that the British want to keep Invincible. They have then three of a class. Before the Falklands war they had only wanted to keep two of a class. They will now have three ships similar to Invincible, and I am not surprised at all. It really is a great misfortune for Australia's defence forces.

Question

Does the Government regret making the offer to the British Government?

Prime Minister

No. I think they would have wanted to keep the ship anyway. And in all the circumstances of the Falklands war, and having in mind the losses the British had suffered during that war, the only decent thing to do was not to hold them to any moral obligation. There wasn't any decent option, other than that.

Question

Yesterday's vote by the Left in supporting Mr Hayden. Did it surprise you at all?

Prime Minister

Not at all.