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PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

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MR CAIN AND NUCLEAR SHIPS

Mr Cain has renewed his opposition to the visits of nuclear armed or nuclear powered ships to Victorian ports. He admits that in doing this he is at odds with the decision of the recent ALP federal conference. His renewed opposition to visits to Victoria by American naval ships needs to be seen against the background of the Victorian's ALP conference's decision for "The State Government to oppose within the limits of its powers the entry of nuclear vessels into Victorian waters." Who can doubt that in opposing these visits Mr Cain is bowing to pressure from the Socialist Left forces within the Victorian ALP to get rid of ANZUS.

In persisting with his opposition, Mr Cain is contradicting his own statement of 16 June that "It has never been Victoria's intention to intrude into the Federal Government's responsibilities for defence and foreign affairs." Mr Cain must now give an assurance that he will act upon these words and provide the appropriate services and facilities for the visit by USS Goldsborough and for other visits by American naval ships. The Commonwealth would expect Mr Cain to give instructions to the authorities of the Port of Melbourne and other Victorian ports to co-operate with any such visits.

There have been more than 500 visits to Australian ports by ships of the American, British and French navies over the past 10 years. At the 31st ANZUS Council Meeting in Canberra on 22 June, Australia, New Zealand and the United States reconfirmed the importance of access by United States naval ships to the ports of its treaty partners as a critical factor in sustaining the United States deterrent capacity and its ability to meet its responsibilities to its treaty partners and the Western Alliance. It is vital for such visits to continue without impediment and difficulties being placed in their way.