

TRANSCRIPT OF NEWS CONFERENCE, AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION,  
NEW DELHI, 24/11/83, MR. HAWKE, MR. LEE KUAN YEW, MR.  
GHAZALI SHAFFIE

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PM: Well Gentlemen, Lee Kuan Yew and Mr. Dhanabalan and I have had a very useful discussion over lunch and I think I can say from the point of view of the Australian Government that any -let me use words carefully - any degree of misunderstanding that there may have been has been eliminated and we have a clear understanding of the commonality of our basic position in regard to Kampuchea, as indeed to our attitudes to the region generally.

LEE: I would subscribe to what Bob Hawke has said. I think this has been a good lunch meeting. The food was agreeable too and what is much more important is that we think we see the broad picture more or less the same way which is more important than just resolving this minor difficulty. It doesn't mean we are not going to have hiccups from time to time. You are an open society. We are fairly robust in our reaction, but there are no - as far as I can make out, unless we have been deceitful to each other - there are no hidden traps. We are not out to do things which you would object to, nor are the Australians out to have a settlement which we would find difficult to live with.

JOURNALIST: So the row is over. Is that a good summary?

LEE: This row is over, yes. I think this was never a row anyway. I mean Mr. Dhanabalan can assure you that he never intended this as any examination.

JOURNALIST: Can you give us an example of minor differences which you still have?

LEE: I don't really want to go into specifics. The plain fact is there is a sum body of opinion in Australia to which the Prime Minister alluded which feels that anything to do with Pol Pot is untouchable. We have explained to the Prime Minister that we are not fans, but we've got to live with the world as we find them. We find - we've found only Son Sann and Sihanouk and they've got to live with Pol Pot and Sihanouk's had his children murdered by Pol Pot and he's still got to be in this coalition government so there are complex reasons why, despite our loathing, we've got to live with the coalition government.

JOURNALIST: Mr. Lee, do you agree with the Australian position that there are great dangers involved in the isolation of Vietnam?

LEE: I don't believe that anybody can isolate Vietnam if she doesn't want to be isolated. They are the world's best communicators. They've had 1945 - they fought against the French. They spoke to the French people over the heads of the French Government. They fought against the Americans. They spoke to the Americans over the heads of the American Government. We would never dream of preventing them from communication

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I think our great strength in this particular case has been that they have got bad intentions to try and hide from the world. That's why they can't communicate.

GHAZALI: ... to this particular point. As soon as the American withdrawal took place ... unaware in these countries that went to Vietnam offered technical help so you can be sure that the whole exercise ... in order to resolve the Kampuchean question is precisely not to allow Vietnam to be isolated.

HAWKE: Could I just make the point that I made in Bangkok that those of the Australian contingent would be aware. I made it clear that we were not putting it that it was the ASEAN countries which had isolated Vietnam. It was an act of free choice on their part as to how they would conduct their affairs.

JOURNALIST: Was there any discussion at all about a peace mission in the area?

PM: No.

JOURNALIST: Mr. Lee, could I ask you another question on Grenada. If you wouldn't mind describing the feeling within the delegates today over the question. Am I right to presume that it is becoming a very thorny question?

LEE: I think we are anxious to get back on time at 3 o'clock because the debate was just warming up. I have no doubts this afternoon that issues will be ... There are people with very strong views on the subject and deep and abiding interests because they live in the region. I'm going to look forward to listening to the arguments. I'm quite sure that sane, rational men do not do insane, irrational things.

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