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TRANSCRIPT OF RADIO INTERVIEW, GOA, 27 NOVEMBER 1983

LOMBARD: INAUDIBLE

PM: I don't want to overstate it, we've had some relaxation and we've had some tennis and an attempt at windsurfing, but there has been a lot of work involved, John, yes.

LOMBARD: This is the first international gathering that you've attended at such level as Prime Minister. How do you find the contacts you've made here?

PM: Very useful. Very wide ranging and they have been, if you like, in two sorts of categories. One, we have to deal with particular issues and problems as I did with Mr. Lee and Ghazali Shaffie, the Malaysian Foreign Minister. Other particular issues, where I've talked with Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, Kenneth Kuanda of Zambia and ... Nyere of Tanzania on the issue of their domestic economy suffering from drought and in that context I have offered additional wheat aid to them ... there has been the more general opportunity of just getting to know people like Mrs. Thatcher, Mrs. Gandhi and so on. That has been extremely useful and it will be very useful for Australia into the future.

MILLS: Mr. Hawke, why is Australia taking part in the group action on Cyprus?

PM: Basically because we were asked to. Secondly, because we do believe that we have got a contribution that we can make and thirdly, there are particular reasons why we should and amongst those particular reasons are two - first, we have a very large community in Australia of Cypriot origin, as you know. Secondly, we have continuously had an involvement in the police force in Cyprus. So have the reason to be involved. We have the capacity to make a contribution and we were nominated as one of the five to be in the group.

MILLS: You said that the Commonwealth group would work with the United Nations. What would the Commonwealth group be able to do that the United Nations alone wouldn't be able to achieve?

PM: Well, Cyprus is a member of the Commonwealth and I believe that that of itself means that the Cypriot authorities would have a greater degree of confidence in knowing that they were working with a group from their own international brotherhood, if you like to put it that way. And the further point I would make is that in the discussions that have taken place before the CHOGM meeting, when Mr. Ramphal, the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth and de Cuellar, the United National Secretary-General, there had been apparently a view expressed from the United Nations that this sort of approach could be of assistance.

LOMBARD: Prime Minister, there has been a tremendous amount of work done at the CHOGM. Has this altered your view of the Commonwealth as a useful instrument for getting things done?

PM: Well, I've always thought it was a useful body. I've never been one to be overtaken by the mysticism of this organisation and I would always caution those who tend to get carried away by that element of it. There would seem to me to be sufficient evidence in the past of concrete achievements for it to be worthwhile continuing and yes, this involvement has confirmed that view because if you look firstly at Cyprus, I think we can with a considerable degree of justification say that we had made a decision here which could lead to the processes of resolution being more sharply defined and perhaps the .. resolution may be achieved more quickly as a result of what we've done.

LOMBARD: On the question of Grenada.

PM: I'm just coming to Grenada. If you look there, when we started off in New Delhi it was a very bitter debate. People who had been here a long time said amongst the most bitter that there has been in the history of the Commonwealth. Now, from that we came down here to Goa to the retreat, a pretty torrid debate still continuing, then a ... working group which contained representatives of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States which had supported the action in Grenada, one or two that hadn't and a representative of Africa which had taken a strong line against. They came up with an agreed document which, when it came back into the full meeting of the Heads of Commonwealth, was debated at length and somewhat amended, but now we have a common document. Now, it seems to me that that is a greater significance for the international debate. It has a great significance, I think, for the debate with any country because what has now come out is an understanding that - your solid arguments in the minds of the Caribbean states - some of them - for the actions that were taken and what has been said now, well let's not indulge in recriminations, let's look to the future and all heads of state welcomed the emergence of the interim administration. All of them. And they're saying, now, let's work with that and hopefully there will be the withdrawal of foreign troops, the states of the area will provide, it is hoped, forces to assist in the maintenance of law and order and from that situation the Commonwealth leaders have indicated a readiness to give sympathetic consideration in any requests for help - not forces, but help that would be relevant to the needs of the state in that area. Now, that seemed to me to be a very significant achievement.

MILLS: Mr. Hawke, on the economic front. What support have you received to your contribution on Friday that the international monetary system, the international financial institutions, don't need changing, they simply need strengthening and being put into the position where they are better able to help the developing countries?

PM: Well, may I say ... modest, I've received very widespread and strong support for the contribution that I made on Australia's behalf and I make the judgement now. It's early, of course, because the debate is going to go on, but I make the judgement now that the sort of thrust which I injected into the debate is likely to be the one that is reflected. That is that you have got to recognise that - firstly, the elements are that you've got to recognise that the significant dimensions of the problems confronting the international community. Secondly, as I was trying to say, we've got to recognise in the dimensions of the problem then be realistic in our proposal and by that I mean particularly, that anything that was done has got to be able to attract the support of the major industrialised countries who provide the main sinew for any international institutions that are going to operate and from that I went to the third point - that we should recognise that the existing international institutions have done a good job in not only handling the financial relations between the debtor countries and creditor nations, but also in facilitating the line with the private financial institutions and it makes sense to try and get a situation in which those institutions are going to be strengthened and so I emphasised in that context the importance of ... IMF, general arrangements to buyers and in regard to the international development.... that we get a position where the replenishments would have to be fixed by July of next year, are in fact fixed by that time because that is very important because that is the area of concessional finance. What I've been trying to say is let's concentrate on the existing institutions, see that their lines are filled according to the timetables that are there now. If we then find that those existing institutions require some supplementation, then let's examine the track in regard to the IMF, there are a range of options and the concept of special drawing rights, the opportunity of getting correct lines through to the central banking system of various countries or the opportunity of going onto the private market. Those are alternatives that are available and it may be that we will have to look at that down the track. But, first of all, try and make sure the existing institutions under their existing ... provisions are equipped to do the job even better than they have to this point. Now, on that sort of thrust, I think, is correct. It is realistic and, as I say, the evidence seems to me to be there to suggest that that sort of thrust, which I have suggested, does recommend itself to the majority of people present.
