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## PRIME MINISTER

TRANSCRIPT OF PRESS CONFERENCE - FRIDAY JUNE 29 1984

HAWKE: Ladies and gentlemen, I'll just make a very brief preliminary comment and then I'll be available for your questions. I have not until today felt inclined to go into any extensive public comment or make myself available in regard to issues that would be involved with the upcoming executive and conference. The State Conferences of the parties have been going on. I did not go to those conferences, I have been asked to go to them and it wasn't appropriate or open to go to them all and we thought in the circumstances we would go to none. But at the conferences and since participants in the conferences have quite properly, and I have no concern about that, engaged in discussions about the issues and in way at times which has involved my position and so I thought it was about time that I was available to comment on some of those issues and I therefore make myself available to you. I make this observation, that while I am prepared to go to these issues I don't intend to take this opportunity to exhaust the arguments that I will be using at the Executive and the Conference on these or any other matters because I still regard it as appropriate for the full development of argument and decision-making to take place at those forums. But having said that I am available for any questions you would like to address to me.

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister, do <sup>you</sup> believe Conference will vote to support uranium mining.

HAWKE: Yes, I believe it will.

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister, Indonesia's Foreign Minister was reported this morning as saying that if Australia's relations with Indonesia over East Timor had reached the stage where it could be advisable for both countries to downgrade their diplomatic ties. Do you agree with that and what sort of resolution would you like to see out of the National Conference on East Timor and Indonesia?

HAWKE: I appreciate that question. I am not going to enter into a detailed analysis of Dr Mochtar's observations because I don't believe that the very important question of our relations with Indonesia would be assisted by doing that. And let me also make the observation that when we're talking about relations with Indonesia, we're doing more than that. Because, inevitably given the very close political association which exists between the constituent members of ASEAN we are talking about more than Indonesia when we talk about Indonesia and therefore I simply content myself with saying in respect of the first part of your question that I don't think a downgrading

of relations would be in the best interests of the two countries. I will continue to be having discussions with my friend and colleague the Foreign Minister, Mr Bill Hayden, and as we have done since we have been in government, Bill and I will be attempting to have a position from Australia's point of view which will enable the maintenance of constructive relationships between our two countries because that's what is in the interests of Australians, of Indonesians and of the countries in the region. And going from that to the latter part of your question I therefore say simply that I hope and I believe that the treatment of this issue by the conference will be such as to enable Bill Hayden and myself to continue along that path.

JOURNALIST: Do you think it's right that 99 Labor Party machine people should be in a position to wreck Australia's relations with its nearest neighbour.

HAWKE: Well, I think that goes to a broader question. I mean it's not simply that. I think your question is broader than that. In a party such as ours, has made the decision to have open conferences and open discussions about issues, it's inevitable, Laurie, that in those circumstances, it's going to discuss a range of issues which can be potentially damaging. You picked one. All I can say is that I've got to express the hope which I do, not only in regard to that issue, but to all others, that the 99 people at the Conference will understand that what they are dealing with is not simply their own view about a particular issue, but that there is an obligation upon all of us at that Conference to understand that the Labor Party is an instrument for advancing the interests and welfare of Australians. And it has always been such. More often than not it's been in Opposition and therefore in that condition of Opposition perhaps you can greater, to a greater degree, exercise the luxury of putting points of view about particular issues. In government I believe that there will be a sharpened appreciation of the responsibility that we all have to conduct ourselves in a way which is going to enable the continued advancement of the interests of the great majority of Australians. And from the first day that we have been in government, not only I, but I believe the government as a whole, has understood the obligations we have not simply to the Party as such, but the obligations we have to Australia. That's been the hallmark of our government. It's the basic explanation of why the stocks of this government have increased substantially since the election. Now we have been successful for that reason and I am confident that the majority of the delegates will have the same view.

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister, will you allow separate issues such as those of foreign banks to intrude upon issues such as East Timor?

HAWKE: Will I allow issues such as the foreign...

JOURNALIST: Will you approve that separate issues such as that of Indonesia and East Timor, by separate issues I mean for example, foreign banks, to intrude upon the Conference's consideration and debating on issues such as Indonesia?

HAWKE: I must confess that I have difficulty in following the question but let me make these observations which I hope are relevant to what's in your mind. The agenda of the Conference will be drawn up in a way which has area by area, dealt with economic, foreign affairs and defence, energy and resources within which uranium will come. And speaking for myself, and I would think speaking for the majority of delegates, I will address myself to the issues before the chair on the basis of the merits of that issue. And as far as I'm concerned, there won't be any concept of what I say on this issue will be shaped by some perception of another issue. Each issue has to live on its own merits, as far as I'm concerned.

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister, why does the National Executive need to intervene in the decision by the State Conference, Victorian State Conference, last weekend regarding reaffiliation.

HAWKE: I understand from the National Secretary that there are two pieces of correspondence either received or on the way, in respect of that issue, and the matter will, by the appropriate processes of the constitution of the Party, be before the Party.

JOURNALIST: Mr Hawke do you want to see <sup>the</sup> Executive next week take a final decision on that matter and what position will you be supporting at that meeting?

HAWKE: I have made it quite clear earlier this year in a number of public statements that I believe that any union has the right to be affiliated. I have made it quite clear on number of occasions that in respect of the unions in question here that they have the right to be affiliated. I have at all points made the distinction and I make it again, and it's very important that it be understood between the union and individuals, and let me make it clear if in respect of any individuals it is claimed and can be established that they are or have recently been members of any proscribed organisation then they as individuals, can seek, certainly they cannot expect any special treatment. They would have, if they wished to become members of the Labor Party, serve that period of waiting before being able to become members. As far as the unions are concerned, I believe that the unions have the right to be affiliated. I do not believe that you can have a situation where men and women of Victoria who are clerks, men and women who are members of the shop assistants' union and so on with the other two unions, if they by their democratic processes have elected their leadership and by their democratic processes have indicated a desire to be members of this Party then I believe they have the right through their unions to be members.

JOURNALIST: Do you have a majority support on the Executive for that point of view, Prime Minister?

HAWKE: I hope so.

JOURNALIST: A final decision next week.

HAWKE: Well I think there has been an assumption that if the National Executive is to make a decision different from

that made by the Victorian Conference there may be some attempt to have the matter raised at the Conference. I would hope that if the view that I put is accepted by the Federal Executive that people would say well that's fair enough. I'm not sure that they will.

JOURNALIST: Are you also concerned that without the union affiliation the Victorian branch remains in the hands of the Socialist Left?

HAWKE: Well, I'm not a member of the Socialist Left so the answer to that question is fairly obvious. I would prefer that within this delightful party of ours which has its factions, factions or however you describe them. I guess its human nature that I prefer the shade to which I belong to be more dominant. And I guess that is quite clear.

JOURNALIST: Sir, Mr Hartley said two days ago, that the Left already controls four state branches and two territories and is close to controlling the Party nationally. Do you agree with that?

HAWKE: Well, I think there have been many occasions on public record in the past where I don't agree with Mr Hartley and this is another.

JOURNALIST: What effect would it have if Mr Hartley was to be endorsed as number three on the Victorian Senate ticket?

HAWKE: Fortunately, that's hypothetical and I am not addressing myself to a hypothetical question.

JOURNALIST: Could you in all conscience, Mr Hawke, as Prime Minister of this country, phase out those uranium mines in the Northern Territory and stop Roxby Downs going ahead?

HAWKE: I don't believe I'm going to be faced with that hypothetical position.

JOURNALIST: What form do you expect your pro-uranium policy to take?

HAWKE: I would think that the position that will be adopted by the conference would be the position which I advanced before the Caucus and for which I obtained a Caucus majority.

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister, what happens if the National Executive endorses your view on the unions and the Victorian state branch decides to dig in?

HAWKE: Well I don't know what they'd be digging in. There are a couple of observations that one could make.

JOURNALIST: I'm saying if they resist.

HAWKE: The authority of the federal party is paramount.

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister, if the Left of Victoria say that they'll be pushing at Conference for a complete ban on visits to this country by nuclear powered warships. What effect would that have do you think?

HAWKE: Well, it's again hypothetical. I mean that's a view that they have expressed. Let me make this point, Peter, that the position of the Party has been quite clear on this issue. I have no expectation that it will be changed.

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister, following on from that. If a Labor government is elected in New Zealand on Saturday fortnight, how would you cope with it, the Labor pledge that there'll be no visits by nuclear-powered or armed warships to New Zealand waters. Is it the end of ANZUS as Sir Robert says?

HAWKE: Well, we'll have to see. And let me say I wish my friend and colleague, David Lange, that in a fraternal sense good luck, although I can't interfere and don't in the process of elections over there, but we would have to see in that hypothetical situation what a Labor government would do. Now I don't know what they would do.

JOURNALIST: But the policy is quite clear.

HAWKE: I repeat I don't know what a Labor government would do. And what my government would do and say would have to depend upon what it was that we were looking at. I don't accept at this stage what an incoming Labor government in New Zealand would do on this issue. I don't know.

JOURNALIST: What do you expect to happen over the future of strategic bases in Australia, at conference?

HAWKE: I've already answered that question. Well not exactly but it's in the same category as referring to the nuclear ships visits. The position of the party has been clear in the last, in recent conferences. I don't expect it to change.

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister, what would you say to those members of your party who would either want to maintain the current policy on East Timor, as in the resolution of the last conference, or even toughen it up by insisting that de-recognition take place immediately.

HAWKE: I would say, and it really is a variation on what I said before, I would say that Bill Hayden is absolutely correct in what he has said publicly, he says it with my endorsement. We have maintained close communication and consultation, one with the other, on this issue, from the first day of government. Bill has very correctly said that if we are concerned, as we must be, with the interests of the people of East Timor, then we shouldn't do things which are going to make it more difficult for the Australian Government to be of relevant assistance. And I think that any course of action along the lines which are implied in your question, explicit in your question, would make it more difficult for our government to not only have constructive relations, but within that constructive relationship to be of assistance to the people of East Timor.

JOURNALIST: Mr Hawke, the Caucus uranium motion implies rather than explicitly supports new contracts for existing mines. In the motion which your supporters, which your supporters will put to Conference, will the support for new contracts be

more explicit?

HAWKE: There should be no doubt that what is intended by the Caucus resolution, which I was instrumental in achieving, means. That the existing mines in the Northern Territory are able to have new contracts, in other words, they are able to go to completion.

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister, pressure of work kept you away from the state conferences of your Party, will pressure of work keep you away from the Olympic Games in Los Angeles?

HAWKE: I have not at any stage had any intention of going to the Olympic Games?

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister, what was it that you were doing that was more important than addressing the various state branches of the Labor Party which were electing delegates which will, who ultimately form Labor Party policy?

HAWKE: Well, you know one of the reasons why we were enjoying and will continue to enjoy the very substantial support of the Australian electorate is that we have a capacity to get our priorities right. And last year we had to prepare our first budget and it was a remarkably successful budget. I have been engaged in the last few weeks just before coming here, and when I leave this delightful gathering will go straight back to the less exotic atmosphere of the Expenditure Review Committee, where we will continue the shaping of the budget for 84-85. And may I say you're talking about relatively important things. I think it is rather unfortunate that given all the excitement and drama of the conferences that there has been a tendency to overlook the fact that in the same period this country has seen the conjunction of the most favourable range of economic statistics that this country has seen, I would think, in the last decade. All the evidence is coming out day after day of the overwhelming success of the Government in its economic planning. You can look not merely at the national accounts figures, but the figures in regard to investment that are coming out, the figures in regard to retail sales generally, cars in particular. There has not been, I think for a decade, a more consistently favourable conjunction of economic statistics. Those things aren't happening by accident, it's because this government has got its priorities right and I will continue to do that.

JOURNALIST: You're expressing confidence in winning in all these major issues. What sort of margin do you think you are going to win by, is it going to be close?

HAWKE: I would think it's obviously correct to say that on some of the issues it will be quite close. But I don't want to reduce such important issues to the language of the sporting domain, but it is the case if you ever go to the races, that the bookmaker pays the same amount if your favoured steed has won by a short nostril as if it wins by the length of the straight.

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister, can we interpret from your answer to my last question that the popularity of your government is dependent on you not taking a major role in formulating party policy.

HAWKE: Well, you are the ones for interpretation and I am at times amazed by the capacity for misinterpretation that is evident, if you engaged in that particular piece of interpretation well that'll be for you.

JOURNALIST: I was after your interpretation.

HAWKE: No you said can we interpret. You said can we interpret. If you want to put the question to me, what would my interpretation be you do it.

JOURNALIST: What is your interpretation?

HAWKE: Of what?

JOURNALIST: What is your interpretation of the answer to my last question?

HAWKE: What's the interpretation of my answer to your last question, you'll have to do better than that?

JOURNALIST: Is there any practicable way that an Australian Government could apply a ban to the export of uranium to France?

HAWKE: It could be done. It would involve a breaking of contractual commitment and I think it is clear, and people will have to take this into account. There is no doubt that if that were done, it would involve no damage to France. It all, by definition, would involve damage to Australia.

QUESTION: Are you supporting the continuation of that ban...?

PM: That's an issue that I would rather keep for discussion at the Conference, and I say that because, as you know in the period leading up to the Conference there's a lot of discussions going on between different groups. I don't think it would help to take that any further.

QUESTION: Prime Minister, do we take it on your uranium stand that there can be therefore no accommodation with the Northern Land Councils demands that contracts be allowed for those two new mines?

PM: Well, under the Caucus decision that is not open. One of the interesting things is going to be in the uranium debate is to see whether those who in the past have passionately used as an argument against uranium mining the position and attitude of the aborigines, whether they will use the same argument on this occasion.

QUESTION: Do <sup>you</sup> accept that opinion is divided on the issue of uranium then Mr Hawke? The Chairman of the National Aboriginal Conference in the Northern Territory came out yesterday very strongly against uranium mining, including the potential dangers to the Aboriginal people?

PM: Well, it's been made quite clear to us that the majority position of those speaking on behalf of Aborigines is in favour of it.

QUESTION: Mr Hawke, do you think it was proper for you to call Justice Ludeke at the time he was considering academic salaries?

PM: Call him. Yes, we wanted to find out whether in fact there was a possibility of an argument being put, or the matter being re-opened in regard to phasing. Of course, what's improper about that?

QUESTION: What is the Australian Government's attitude to the situation on the Irian Jaya border. Do you see a role for the United Nations to handle the refugee ...?

PM: That's a good question. I am glad it has been raised. I can't - I think you will appreciate - develop a detailed answer to it, but I am glad it has been raised, because the previous questions in regard to our relations with Indonesia have been put in regard to East Timor. And I believe that the issues in the area to which you refer are in some sense more important. We have adopted a position of saying here, you have an issue between two sovereign & independent countries. We have not sought to impose our position upon them. And we've done that on the basis that the evidence to this stage has been one of goodwill between the two countries, and in particular if I may say so from personal knowledge, on the part of Prime Minister Somare a very positive attitude towards President Suharto, and Indonesia. And so we hope that the processes between the two countries directly involved will involve a resolution of this problem, and I still express the view that I think that's what will happen. We have expressed to both countries our obvious interest in the issue and our concern that it does not lead to difficulties and greater problems between the two. The two countries are aware of our interest and our attitude. And as for the question of the role of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees to which you refer, it may be that there is a possibility of a greater role there. But, I go back to my basic point that this is something which really needs to be determined, hopefully, between the two countries involved. There is a tendency still for some Australians to think of Papua New Guinea as something less than a totally sovereign independent country. Because of the relationship we have we make a mistake if we allow, even implicitly, that .... Papua New Guinea is a completely sovereign independent nation, as is Indonesia, and therefore the resolution of the problem between them and their border must be basically between them. I simply say on behalf of the Australian Government that we stand ready if between them they feel there is some role that we can play, stand ready to help. But we do not believe that we should, as I say even implicitly, think that they anything less than a total right to solve the matter between themselves.

QUESTION: Yet, Prime Minister there are sections of your Party who don't seem to be cognizant of those sensitivities and would seek to impose a view through a resolution at the National Conference.

PM: Well, anyone who believes that resolutions at National Conference are going to resolve issues are wrong. They are not. But certainly they are not going to resolve issues between two other sovereign independent nations. Perhaps if I go back to the answers that I gave earlier, that if we are to be concerned about the interest of the people concerned - that is in East Timor - the people of that region and Irian Jaya, the people there in the border area,



PM: cont.....

then we ought so to conduct ourselves in the way which maximises the capacity for the Australian Government to be of practical and constructive assistance if we are sincere about wanting to help the people concerned.

QUESTION: Prime Minister, does the Australian Government have a view about the large scale trans-migration program that is about to take off in Irian Jaya, and given the sensitivity of the whole situation there and the effect that such a wholesale program would have on a relatively small melanesian people of Irian Jaya - what is that Australian view, and have you expressed any view to Jakarta?

PM: At a recent conference of the group of nations concerned with Government assistance to Indonesia, the Australian delegation did raise the question of what was the view of the Indonesian Government about the importance of the trans-migration program. That was raised, the question was raised, but Peter not in a way which could carry the implication that we can tell a sovereign independent nation what it does about its internal, economic, demographic, social policies. And if the Government of Indonesia was to start telling me what I should do about our internal policies you could be assured that I would on behalf of this country be making it quite clear that the internal decisions internal economic, and social demographic decisions about Australia were the business of Australia. And I would be very definite on behalf of this country in saying whether it was to Indonesia, or to any other country, the decisions within Australia are decisions to be made by the Government of Australia.

QUESTION: Sir, isn't that the same attitude that Mr Gromyko expressed to Mr Hayden?

PM: Yes, it is I guess, and I would simply say that in regard to the question of individual human rights that there is a question which transcends international boundaries in terms of the rights of nations to express views about those issues of individual human rights. And Bill Hayden was acting, not only with my complete support but, in accordance with I think international standards in doing that. I don't know that you can draw exactly the same parallel between a question of how there is an abuse of individual human rights, and a decision about a relocation program of people from one part of a country to another. As far as Indonesia is concerned is it being put that there is not some basic general agreement that it makes sense within Indonesia to look at a position where you've got this great majority of some now 140 million people living on two islands. You've got other areas which offer greater opportunities for development in economic terms and individual terms. There is obviously a sound argument for that sort of position. I don't think you can equate that Laurie, with the treatment of Sakharov which by any standards is repugnant.

QUESTION: Mr Hawke, you've been critical in the past of human rights violations in the Soviet Union, do you have a responsibility to apply the same philosophy to human rights violations in Irian Jaya, and I think particularly in the case of Arnold Ap.

PM: If the evidence were available that you had an analogous situation in regard to Ap as you do in regard to Sakharov, and I don't accept on the basis of what's been put before me, that there is an analogy - yes, we would. You can't draw a distinction on the question of the fundamental violation of human rights that's happening in regard to Sakharov and say, well yes, we'll criticise that in the Soviet Union but not somewhere else. All I can say is that on the evidence that is available to me, and I think to the Foreign Minister, you are not in a position to draw that analogy.

QUESTION: Mr Hawke, going back to uranium. Is it realistic for people in the Northern Territory to believe on purely economic optimum and economic rights that the Jabiluka and Coongarra mines could be given the go-ahead and given <sup>that</sup> sequential developments have been suggested before.

PM: Well, as it's not going to be a proposition that will be put at the conference or that I think will be carried, well then as far as the policy of the Party would be then, it would not be realistic to expect that.

QUESTION: Mr Hawke, a representative of the Free West Papua Movement, Mr Henk Joku when he was in Canberra earlier this week, mentioned that he had hoped Australia would consider taking refugees in the future Direct from Irian Jaya? What was your reaction to that?

PM: Look, you are getting to the question of a purely hypothetical question and I don't believe generally speaking that they are helpful. What I must say, in answer to that is that I hope that the situation in Irian Jaya will be capable of being resolved in a way that is not going to involve that sort of situation, and I repeat that my Government stands ready, to try and be of assistance in ensuring that happens. And I don't believe that interests of Australia, or Indonesia or Papua New Guinea is served by me going into that hypothetical situation.

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