



## PRIME MINISTER

TRANSCRIPT - TODAY SHOW - 13 JULY 1984

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LEIBMAN: Today sees the end of the 1984 Labor Party National Conference in Canberra and most observers agree that the Government has emerged with a range of moderate and flexible policies even though the Conference wasn't all smooth sailing - uranium, East Timor, and to a lesser extent foreign banks - provided the controversy and decisions on those issues didn't all go the Government's way, providing small embarrassments for Prime Minister Hawke. Nevertheless Mr Hawke has every reason to feel more than satisfied with the outcome of the Conference and I spoke with him last night and asked if he was satisfied that the Conference's decision on uranium reflected the community's view.

P.M.: Well it's not a question of thinking about it. Every poll that has been taken of the Australian community shows that they agree, if I can put it this way, with the position which I have been advocating now in Australia since the end of the 1970's. I've been steadfast in advocating this and every poll, including the latest which was taken on 29 May of this year by the Bulletin, showed these things. Firstly a clear majority of all Australian voters, secondly the majority of voters in all parties - the majority of Labor voters, the majority of Democratic Party voters and the majority of Liberal/National Party voters, and thirdly, as the issue was put as though women are different on this issue, a clear majority of women in favour. And that poll is confirmed by the most recent research that we've done within the Australian Labor Party.

LEIBMAN: Why then limited mining and export of uranium. I mean, as Tony Gray has said, if it is good enough for South Australia and Northern Territory, why not elsewhere?

P.M.: But I quite frankly concede that you could point to limits of logic in this position. But you have to move in a way which takes account of the current realities. Let me make this point - that it's my assessment that with Ranger operating which I remind you is the second largest uranium mine in the world - that's operating now in the Northern Territory - and with Roxby coming on stream which will be the largest mine in the world - than Australia is going to be able in the foreseeable future with the resources it's got to meet the contract requirements that it's likely to come up for. Now the Party has made its decision in those circumstances and I believe the overwhelming majority of Australians think it's a sensible way of going about it now.

LEIBMAN: Prime Minister, one of the major factors at this Conference was the emergence as a voting block, if you like, of the Centre Left and at least one leading member of the Left wing has said that the Centre Left is really just a wing of the Right. Do you agree with that? Gerry Hand was the man who said it.

P.M.: Yes well I've never been one who believes that the application of tags as I've put it, exhaust your intellectual responsibility in analysing political events. Some people seem to think if you just say I'll put this tag on, that you've really said everything, and of course that is a nonsense and always has been a nonsense. I think the reality Steve, is essentially this, that the votes that we have won, the Government has won, that have won support for the positions that I have espoused, I think those votes would have emerged at any rate. But I think to the credit of the Centre Left grouping, as they describe themselves, that they have been able to impose a discipline upon those votes. And so where there might have been perhaps one or two who straggled over the other way I think the existence of the group has meant a more tightly disciplines vote and so we have tended to maximise or go close to maximising, anyway, the votes for what I regard as the sensible positions, the ones which both reflect I think, fundamental Labor positions and the aspirations of the Australian people, so I think that's been the advantage of the disciplining of those votes.

LEIBMAN: How do you think Bill Hayden has emerged from this Conference? I mean some sections of the media this morning were suggesting that he is now the Party's elder statesman.

PM: I don't think elder statesman is the right word, but I think that Bill Hayden has emerged with considerable credit in the period leading up to the Conference. Bill and I have had a number of conversations, and it really reflects what I said in answer to a previous question that we agree on issues. I think he's played an admirable role within his group, particularly if I may say so, on the uranium issue. Because within the Centre Left, there were a few, five, about five, who were regarding themselves in a somewhat difficult position about voting for us on this matter. Now Bill and others within the Centre Left, in the meetings that they held on this issue, held a very tough line, and a persuasive line. And that is to their credit.

LEIBMAN: Mr Hawke, on the David Combe decision, you said that you hope the affair is now a thing of the past. But do you really believe after what happened to Combe that he is willing to forgive and forget?

PM: I can't put myself into David's mind. All I can say is this: that everyone who's been close to me from that day in April last year when I had this situation put before me, everyone knows that at no stage have I had any personal animus against David. How could I? He's been a friend of mine for very many years as I said to the Conference. I had saved him in 1976 at the time of the Iraqi affair and had incurred the wrath of people across the spectrum in the Labor Party. So how could I have any animus against him as a person? And at no point have I had that. I've noticed that he's said some very tough things about me but I can understand that he was hurt. His family was hurt, and its human nature in those circumstances that he's going to say some tough things. All I'm saying and putting the proposition that I believe its in the past, is to say that there is no blackball on him and what he feels towards me, how he feels, he can conduct himself, towards me is a matter for David. I have no animus and the relationship is really a matter for him.

LEIBMAN: Would you give him a job?

PM: Well, what we've said is that there's no impediment, there's no blackball. He has talents, qualities to bring to bear and I would think that if he saw fit to apply for some position that may arise, of some contract with the Government that should arise, he'd obviously be in a very good position to get it. What's been clarified is that there is no impediment there and what's important in respect of his business is that the private sector should not see him as being less qualified to conduct his business than others because of anything that's happened.

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