



# PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

4 March 1985

As host of the ANZUS Council due to meet in Australia in July the Government has decided that it is necessary at this point to announce the postponement of the meeting.

The serious difficulties between the United States and New Zealand have arisen following the New Zealand Government's decision on United States naval vessels.

In the light of the New Zealand decision, the United States response to that decision, and other recent developments including the curtailing of intelligence exchanges between the United States and New Zealand, it is clear that the holding of a regular ANZUS Council Meeting at the present time would be impracticable.

These developments need to be kept in perspective. As I said at the White House on 7 February, an important aspect of the ANZUS relationship has become a matter of close concern. But the ANZUS Treaty remains. It needs to be emphasised that this point is not in dispute between any of the ANZUS partners.

The pre-eminent responsibility of the Government is to ensure the protection of Australia's essential national security interests, and it will now do this through bilateral channels with both partners while the present circumstances prevail.

In the case of the United States, the Australian Government has been reassured by views expressed to it publicly and privately by President Reagan and other senior representatives of the Administration, that the Australian/United States Alliance under ANZUS remains as strong as ever.

In the case of New Zealand, we propose to pursue our important defence relationship on a bilateral basis reflecting both our traditions and the common need to respond to regional security requirements.

Further announcements on specific arrangements in regard to both relationships will be made shortly.