



PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

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In my statement of 4 March on ANZUS, I indicated that the Government proposed in the present circumstances to pursue our important defence relationship with New Zealand on a bilateral basis reflecting both our traditions and the common need to respond to regional security requirements. Subsequently I have stressed the importance of consultations with both our ANZUS partners on the most realistic and constructive basis possible.

Australia and New Zealand share important and well established interests in the maintenance of stability and peaceful development in the South Pacific and more widely.

In accordance with this approach, Minister for Defence Kim Beazley will visit New Zealand from 31 March to 4 April for regular talks on defence co-operation with relevant New Zealand Ministers.

Thereafter I have agreed with Prime Minister David Lange's request to meet me when he visits Canberra on 17 April. That will provide the opportunity for talks on a wide range of issues.

These meetings will provide opportunities for the Government to ensure that Australia's traditional defence relationships are fully protected for so long as arrangements with New Zealand under ANZUS continue to be curtailed.