



PRIME MINISTER

E & O E - PROOF ONLY

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW WITH TREVOR WATSON (ABC) - PORT MORESBY

16 SEPTEMBER 1985

WATSON: Mr Hawke, what is Australia's response to Mr Mitterand's invitation to you and other South Pacific leaders to go to Mururoa?

PM: I simply want to say to President Mitterand what I have said recently and that if he wants to invite the countries of the region to come to Mururoa so that he can show us how absolutely safe the tests are then I suggest to the President that he organise the picking up of all the testing equipment and taking it back to France and undertake in metropolitan France this testing which he assures us is so safe.

WATSON: Well, how do you see this invitation? Is it a propoganda stunt? Is it contemptuous? How do you see it?

PM: I don't want to talk about contempt. But it seems to me that the government of France is discerning the truth and that is that there is a growing pressure amongst the people in the countries of the Pacific region that we find absolutely unacceptable, almost obscene, the fact that a metropolitan European power comes and conducts its nuclear tests in our region. And at the same they are doing it says that it is absolutely safe. As I repeat, if it is absolutely safe let them go and do it their own region.

WATSON: France is not likely to go and do that, though is it? In fact it is almost certain to stay at Mururoa?

PM: Yes, well one can't be certain just what happens. I know that early in the 1970s when I assumed the presidency of the ACTU, when they were conducting atmospheric nuclear testing, they said they were going to keep on doing that. Well, we led a world-wide protest on that. And we were told then that that protest had accelerated the move the underground testing. Well, I would hope that they would come to understand the strength, the growing strength, of the attitudes on this matter.

WATSON: The President's office has said that anyone who opposes French interests in the region will be considered to be adversarial. How do you react to that?

PM: Well I understand that the French attribute themselves, to themselves a great capacity for logic. This is introducing something quite new into the language and the reasoning of

PM cont: international relations. I ask people to contemplate what is the logic to what President Mitterand appears to be saying, that is if you oppose the policy or action of another nation you are therefore its foe. Now I would suggest to the President of France and the government of France that they don't really insult the intelligence of the people of either my country or the people of the countries of this region by attempting to introduce that sort of nonsense into the dialogue between nations.

WATSON: Mr Lange doesn't seem to mind being cast in that adversary role or being considered a foe. How do you feel about it?

PM: Well, I don't go around looking for enemies and Mr Lange's reaction is for Mr Lange. I have expressed the reaction of my Government.

WATSON: Finally then sir, how would you at this moment describe Australia's relations with France?

PM: Well they are like the curate's egg. In parts good, but in parts bad because together with the nations of the region, the signing recently of the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty have made it clear, and we have been for some time, that we simply do not approve of the actions of the French in this regard. And so that in that area our relations are not good. But that doesn't preclude us from being able to have the cooperation with France and the people of France in other areas.

WATSON: Would you be prepared to go Paris, as Mr Lange says he would be, for discussions with President Mitterand?

PM: Well, I have already done that. I did that in 1983.

ENDS