



PRIME MINISTER

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JOURNALIST: Mr Hawke, has Mr Somare indicated any change of view on the Australian patrol boats?

PM: I am glad that question has been asked. I have had a discussion with the Prime Minister and I am very pleased to announce that Papua New Guinea will be taking four patrol boats. So they will become part of the program. I am very pleased to announce that. And it will be important I think to have this commonality program, Papua New Guinea and other important countries in the region.

JOURNALIST: How did you change Mr Somare's mind?

PM: We just had a discussion about it and while the basic specifications of, I take out the word basic, the specifications of the boat will not be changed. We will under the defence co-operation program, provide a degree of armament to the vessel which will meet their requirements. And so I think everyone's best interests have been well served.

JOURNALIST: The original agreement was for 6 boats. Will they be getting two boats from elsewhere?

PM: No they wouldn't be getting the two boats from elsewhere as we understand it.

JOURNALIST: Are you surprised (inaudible)

PM: No. My colleagues of the Australian media will tell you, I am always relaxed about these matters. I think you can very often get through what appear to be problems just by some sensible discussion. And that is what happened in this case.

JOURNALIST: Are you disappointed that they are not taking the full 6 boats?

PM: No, not at all. I think that this is appropriate at this stage.

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister, President Mitterand has invited Pacific leaders to Maraga Ball to see how safe it is. Will you be going?

PM: I will not. I have one message and one message alone for President Mitterand. And that is the one I delivered recently. If President Mitterand is so interested to prove to everyone in our region just how absolutely safe these tests are there is one logical conclusion that follows. Take his tests back to France and have those absolutely safe tests in metropolitan France.

JOURNALIST: Have you any idea of why he is making this offer at this time, domestic political reasons?

PM: I am not privy to the workings of the mind of President Mitterand. And I don't assume the impudence of trying to enter his mind. But the message that I have given is the right one. And just you look at it. The logic of it is overwhelming. He is saying to the countries of this region, come and see how absolutely safe it is. Now if that is true then pick up his trappings and all his scientists who can tell you how absolutely it is. Pick it all up and take it back and do it in France. Because it is absolutely safe.

JOURNALIST: Mr Hawke, in the last 24 hours Mr Mitterand has suggested ...

PM: You just demoted him, he is President.

JOURNALIST: Sorry, President. President Mitterand has suggested that anybody who criticises France's tests or its operations in the Pacific in fact are foes of France. Are you putting Australia in that category?

PM: It is introducing a new dimension into international relations. The logic of that is and I understand that the French have a great love of logic, that the logic of that is that if you oppose a particular policy of another country then you're its foe. That introduces a very dangerous dimension into relations between nations. I repudiate it.

JOURNALIST: Mr Hawke, did you discuss this issue with your South Pacific Forum colleagues this morning?

PM: Which issue? The one we are talking about now?

JOURNALIST: (inaudible)

PM: No, I didn't.

JOURNALIST: So you don't have any idea what their response is?

pm; Yes, I do. I met with them Rarotonga and on the basis of everything that happened there I would believe that their reaction would be the same as mine.

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister, you witnessed Papua New Guinea's independence 10 year celebrations today. Do you remain confident that our bicentennial celebrations will go smoothly?

PM: They are two independent matters. I think it is appropriate that I should not intrude Australian domestic matters here. I am more than happy to answer any questions about that when I return to Australia.

JOURNALIST: Mr Hawke, the Nuclear Free Zone Treaty which was signed today. The American response so far has been that they have been studying that agreement to see implications of its policies in the Pacific. Have you had any more feedback from the United States about their attitude to it? And the country of the treaty ...

PM: I don't want to go into details. But let me say this. You will appreciate that my Defence Minister, Kim Beazley, has just been in the United States. Obviously, amongst other matters he discussed this issue. Those discussions will continue at a number of levels. I simply express the hope that the United States will appreciate both the intrinsic importance and significance of the Treaty for the countries of this region, indeed beyond it. And also its total compatibility with our alliance relationship and therefore in the light of those considerations we will be able in due time to bring it to become signatories to the protocols.

But you will appreciate that under the decisions made at Rarotonga there will be later this year, I think probably about November, the officials together will be approaching the metropolitan and nuclear powers. But in the time leading up to those joint approaches we will continue these discussions. And as I say I hope they will be fruitful.

JOURNALIST: Onto another matter. Australia has got a direct involvement with the Irian Jayan situation here through money we have contributed towards feeding those people who have come across into Papua New Guinea through the United Nations. Mr Morrison has spent ten days in Irian Jaya and has made some comments about his visit there. And the Prime Minister, Mr Somare, has commented that consideration must be given to allowing some of the people in those camps to stay here, to resettle in Papua New Guinea. I was wondering if you had discussed these matters while you have been up here and what your overall impressions are of (1) the relations between this country and Indonesia and (2) the developments on the border?

PM: Let me make these points. Firstly, I must put the first consideration that I have consistently made whenever this issue has arisen. And that is that the situation on the border is one between two sovereign, independent nations, Papua New Guinea and Indonesia. And we don't presume to intervene in a position of Australia between those two sovereign, independent nations. And that point is paramount and must be understood. Having said that clearly, in relations between these two countries, each of which are friends of ours, and with whom we have good relations, it is in our national interest that the issue between them be resolved in a way which is least disruptive. Therefore, we have had discussions with both Papua New Guinea and Indonesia and no doubt will continue to do so. I have had only a brief opportunity to have discussions with Mr Morrison. I hope that before I leave I may have a further opportunity. He will be submitting a detailed report of his visit to Irian Jaya which of course I will read as soon as I can when I get back. I have discussed the matter also with Mr Somare and I believe as a result of those discussions there will be further meetings between our officials and the officials of Papua New Guinea in the near future so that we can be kept up to date with the latest developments. I should also make a further point that you would appreciate. We in Australia have the added interest now, if you like, in that we have these five West Irians in Torres Strait. have applied for refugee status.

They are not getting refugee status, they are not getting refugee status. And we obviously for that reason have a vested interest in this matter being resolved because I want to make it quite clear as far as Australia is concerned, we do not want to see any exodus of West Irianese into Australia.

JOURNALIST: Mr Hawke, what in fact is happening to these five refugees, if they can't come to Australia.

PM: Well, currently their application for a change of status is being processed. We are opposed to that, but we have as you know the processes under which people there are able to make those applications. We will have to consider the position at the end of those processes.

JOURNALIST: But what is the alternative if they are refused refugee status?

PM: Well we will come to that when this process that is underway at the moment comes to a conclusion.

JOURNALIST: On that point Mr Hawke, the final decision, is it going to be necessarily a decision by government or can it be ... courts ... Dors committee and ultimately by the ...

PM: Well that is what I am referring to, the process, I am referring to the Dors process. And I am not intervening in that at the moment. I am simply saying that I have made our position clear as to what we think. We don't approve of the change of status which is being applied for but they have the right under those processes to do it. And let's just wait and see what happens there.

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister, back on patrol boats. Are any concessions being made to the Papua New Guinean request for ...

PM: No there is no change to the specifications of the boats. The contract was signed last week. I conveyed that to them. We have had the discussions with them last year which ... agreement, 20 July last year in writing. We have proceeded on that basis. They have accepted that and there will be no change to specifications. I have indicated that under the defence co-operation program we will put some armaments on the boat, that involves no change to the specifications, no change at all.

JOURNALIST: ... cost of the armaments coming out of the defence ...

PM: Under the defence co-operation program, yes.

JOURNALIST: (inaudible question on meat cannery, 300 employees,

PM: Well this has been a matter that was discussed earlier at officials level. It hasn't been discussed between the Prime Minister and myself. And I have really got nothing to add on it at this point. I think Papua New Guinea is entitled to make its own decisions. We have made representations to them about the possible implications of these decisions. But it is not a point either the Prime Minister has with me or I with him.

JOURNALIST: Could I follow up Ken's question, Mr Hawke. I was just wondering in your dicussions with Mr Reid about...

PM: No, I am not answering any questions about that here. I would neither be fair to myself or as I know ... to your colleagues that you have left behind in Canberra.

JOURNALIST: (inaudible question)

PM: I am prepared to answer any questions in the Parliament or outside the Parliament, not only prepared to but looking forward to it.

JOURNALIST: Will you also talk to the Fijian Government about accepting the patrol boats?

PM: Our discussions with Fiji are going on on this matter.

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