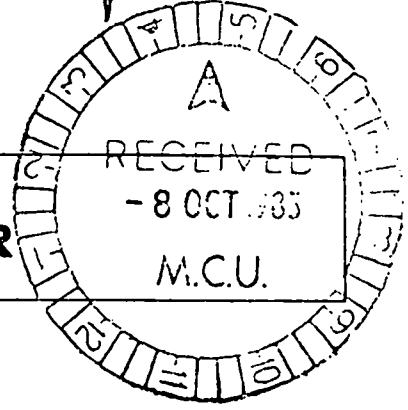




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**PRIME MINISTER**

E. & O.E. - PROOF ONLY

TRANSCRIPT OF PRIME MINISTER ON BBC WORLD AT ONE

JOURNALIST: ..... (inaudible) South Africa could well become the major issue at the Commonwealth conference. We reckon it will be the dominating issue.

PM: I would think it would be.

JOURNALIST: Nothing else can really match this in importance?

PM: I wouldn't have thought so. This doesn't mean that there are not other important issues. Obviously the questions of international economic concern and the developing trends towards increasing protectionism around the world by any standards of relevant judgment, those are important issues. But I adhere to my first observation, I believe that this issue that you mention will be the dominant one.

JOURNALIST: You have already imposed some fairly limited sanctions. You have closed down your Trade Commission office and you have banned the export of petroleum products and so on. Do you think the Commonwealth countries generally will be looking for a much tougher package of sanctions?

PM: I would think that the Commonwealth Heads of Government will be approaching it in this way. Firstly, that we would all, I believe, rather see the obscenity of apartheid come to an end as a result of a realisation on the part of the South African regime that they must take action to bring about this result. Speaking for myself, and I would think that this would be the view of other Commonwealth countries, rather than South Africa being forced to that position by the application of general economic sanctions. It would be more preferable if they would understand the growing force of world opinion. So speaking for myself, we will be doing two things. We will certainly be urging the Commonwealth to prepare itself and to take to the United Nations a position in favour of widespread mandatory sanctions. But at the same time as doing that to develop a set of proposals to put to the South African regime requesting them to take observable and meaningful action according to an acceptable timetable to produce a result that will indicate their intention to abolish apartheid. Now in that sense it is a two pronged approach.

JOURNALIST: I think everybody would agree with you. It would be far better to see South Africa changing of its own free will but it doesn't seem to be in Mr Botha's mind the wish to make the statement of intent that Chief Buthelezi says is necessary, that Bishop Tutu says is necessary, that Oliver Tambo above all says is necessary. Has there been any sign, do you think, that the limited sanctions that you and other countries have imposed, the EEC countries also, have had any effect in persuading Mr Botha that the time has come to change his mind?

PM: Well, you have to look at indirect effect as well as direct and I think you would have to say that the growth in not merely feeling around the world but also the growth in the indication of the preparedness to take action including the more recent position of the United States has had an impact upon the business community within South Africa. They have now done specifically two things. They have met with the ANC and they have also within South Africa by public advertisement made their position clear that fundamental changes must be made. Now I believe that one can attribute that change of position and demonstrable change of position on the part of South African business to a reaction on their part to what is being said and done in the rest of the world. That in turn, it seems to me, must begin to have some impact upon the South African regime.

JOURNALIST: Well Sonny Ramphal was talking about the possibility of things like an end to international air links with South Africa, a ban on the import in Commonwealth countries of South African agriculture products generally and that kind of thing. Do you think that it can come to that or do you have to go further to a general trade embargo?

PM: Well I in a sense go back to the previous answer I gave. The Commonwealth can move to a statement that it's prepared to do those sorts of things. I think it will need not only to come to that sort of decision itself but on that basis go into the United Nations and seek the support of non-Commonwealth countries because you will appreciate if you look at the composition of South African trade that that is effected very largely by a number of non-Commonwealth countries as well as Britain. So I think you need the two stages, the Commonwealth and the United Nations but I still make the point that one would hope that on the basis of an indication that the world is prepared to move in this way, the South African regime would come to its senses and realise it is infinitely better that it should take action itself.

JOURNALIST: Yes, but if it doesn't and you have to go to the United Nations ....

PM: If it doesn't, of course, the world in our judgment should be prepared to take this action.

JOURNALIST: But it looks rather as if you have to go to the United Nations and look for mandatory sanctions, as if Britain will stand out against and will veto and so on and so forth. The Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary have made it very plain that they don't believe that economic sanctions are the answer .....

PM: Could I just make this point that Britain may have to come to the realisation that we live in 1985 - Britannia no longer rules the world.

JOURNALIST: And do you think that if Britain persists in their present position at the Commonwealth conference that the British government is going to be isolated?

PM: I believe so.

JOURNALIST: And what effect would that have on the Commonwealth if Britain were to be isolated .....

PM: Well we all attach the utmost importance to our links with Britain, after all so much of our structures sprang from there. The Commonwealth's future existence does not depend upon a situation where we have to have the agreement of Britain to every decision that we in the rest of the Commonwealth believe is demanded by the morality of the situation. Now it is an unfortunate fact, unavoidable, that the decision and the attitude of the British attitude is determined to a very considerable extent by its perception of its economic interests in terms of the very substantial investment it has in South Africa. I can understand its concern about these matters but it is my firm view and I believe it will be the firm view of the overwhelming majority of those represented at the Commonwealth. We are here dealing with issues which transcend an assessment of a commercial balance sheet.

JOURNALIST: What about your own problems with South African, Prime Minister, what is the position at the moment about this unofficial rebel cricket tour that is supposed to be going?

PM: Well unfortunately the position at the moment seems to be that they intend to go ahead. I and my Government couldn't have done more publicly within Australia to indicate our rejection of this concept. We, however, do not follow a policy here of refusing passports. If they go they know they will be going without the support of the Australian Government. They know they will be going against our commitment under the Gleneagles Agreement. We could not have done more to make our position clear on this issue.

JOURNALIST: Well you have, as you call the ..... the use of the shameful. One would expect the players who go to suffer the same kind of punishment as the British players who went.

PM: Well the Australian Cricket Board of control here has made it clear that there will be sanctions, if I can use that word in this context, imposed upon the players. They will not be able to represent their country for a number of years and within the States and even at the level beneath that actions have been taken. So they will be paying a price. Unfortunately, at this stage, it seems a price they are prepared to pay.

JOURNALIST: As you say, it will be directly against the Gleneagles Agreement. Do you think that if it goes ahead the Commonwealth Games in Edinburgh next year are going to be even more jeopardised than they already are?

PM: Not because of our rebel tour, because the African countries have been fullsome in their acknowledgement of the appropriateness of the position of my Government.

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister I wonder if we could talk for a little now about the ANZUS Treaty?

PM: Certainly.

JOURNALIST: Which you say or were saying in March exists in name only. Does it exist in anything more than that now?

PM: As far as the United States and Australia is concerned it, of course, does. Our relationship under the ANZUS Treaty continues as fully and as effectively as they always have. It is the case, of course, that as far as the relationship between the United States and New Zealand under the Treaty that that relationship has been very very substantially diminished.

JOURNALIST: But it does sound, therefore, as if you are talking more now about, if I may say so, an AUS Treaty than an ANZUS Treaty. Do you think New Zealand can be persuaded to come back in?

PM: At the moment, the position of the New Zealand Government in regard to the visits of the United States' ships which may be nuclear capable stands as a barrier to the participation of New Zealand in the ANZUS Treaty. That is the case and I cannot say on the evidence available to me that the New Zealand Government appears to be about to change their position on that matter. So while they maintain that position then there is, as far as the United States and New Zealand is concerned, a stalemate.

JOURNALIST: Now that sounds very much as if you would like New Zealand to reverse the decision ....

PM: Well, let me make the position clear. We said to the New Zealand Government soon after their election what our position was. We said that we regard ANZUS as of fundamental importance to Australia, that we accept as a significant and unavoidable, and appropriate part of that ANZUS relationship, the right of the ships of our American ally to visit Australia ports. That's our position. We explained it to the New Zealanders. We said to them and we said to the Americans - we are not going to be here to tell an independent sovereign nation - New Zealand - what its policy should be. We have a policy which is different from theirs. We will adhere to ours. It is their business as to what they do.

JOURNALIST: I wonder if you could clarify my thought on one thing then. Just under a couple of years ago the British ship 'Invincible' wasn't allowed to come into an Australian port to repair because there was some doubt as to whether she was carrying nuclear weapons and the British Government wouldn't say 'yes' or 'nay' on it. What is the Australian position now if there were .....

PM: The position is quite clear. Firstly, in regard to vessels from the Royal Navy which may have a nuclear capability, they have been able to and will continue to come into our ports. The question of dry-docking raised a different consideration because it may involve the off-loading in those circumstances of nuclear capacities. Now we made it quite clear at the time that in regard to hypothetical situations into the future, we would, of course, do nothing to endanger the safety of the vessel and those upon it. We would deal

with such a circumstance, if it were to arise in the future, on a case by case basis with a clear understanding that we would not do anything to endanger the vessel or the lives of those upon it. We are not dealing with a day to day occurrence. When that situation arose as I recall was the first time that had for tens of years. So it is not appropriate to in any sense speculate beyond what I have just said there in regard to what is an entirely hypothetical situation other than to repeat the two things that I have said. One, that the normal operations of vessels of the Royal Navy will continue to be one of accommodation by us in our ports when they visit. The hypothetical situation of them <sup>using</sup> dry-docking facilities in the case of some emergency - we have stated our policy on that which I have repeated to you.

JOURNALIST: What about the hypothetical consideration of an American Navy ship which might be nuclear needing dry-docking?

PM: Well, the hypothetical situation would be handled by exactly the same formula that I put to you. I have discovered in a long period of public life, and my grandmother warned me - don't spend too much time worrying about hypothetical situations.

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister, it is clear that David Lange in New Zealand would dearly love for the whole area including Australia and New Zealand and the South Pacific generally to be a nuclear-free area. Have you any sympathy with that ambition?

PM: Well you really should catch up with events a bit more. There is such a thing as the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone. It is not David Lange but a fellow called Bob Hawke <sup>who</sup> initiated <sup>it</sup> the South Pacific Forum meeting here in Canberra in July of 1983. As a result of the initiative that I took then, just a few weeks ago in Raratonga eight nations signed that South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone and the ninth, Papua New Guinea, signed it just three weekends ago when I was in Port Moresby.

JOURNALIST: In that case, what about Australian/French relations, in view of France's determination to carry on with testing in Mururoa Atoll?

PM: We came to Government in March of 1983. I had the pleasure of meeting President Mitterand in June of 1983 in Paris. I conveyed directly to him the opposition of my Government and the overwhelming majority of the Australian people at the continuation of French nuclear testing in the Pacific. We have continued to put that position to them, we will continue to do it.

JOURNALIST: Is there anything more at all though. You can protest and protest and protest but President Mitterand seems to be unconvinced by the protest.

PM: Well, that's the thing from President Mitterand We don't contemplate the blowing up of any vessels in any of his harbours.

JOURNALIST: Going onto another topic, do you expect the Commonwealth conference, which as you say will be mainly dominated by sanctions, to be considering the Gorbachev/Reagan summit and what matters of defence might be raised there?

PM: I would think in the considerations that are given by the heads of government to the general international situation that there would be some consideration of the issues likely to arise at that summit meeting. And certainly the areas of concern to Commonwealth countries and, of course, nothing is more important to us than that the two super powers should address themselves to the question of the reduction of armaments in the world generally and regard to nuclear in particular. They have an enormous obligation or responsibility resting upon them, and I would imagine without presuming in advance to pre-empt what the decision of the CHOGM conference would be, I would be very surprised if out of the communique there did not come paragraphs which expressed the hope of the Commonwealth countries directed to leaders of the super powers that they should bend their best endeavours to producing that result.

JOURNALIST: The Commonwealth is a very loose and very desperate collection of States and widely spread. Is it, do you think, still an important factor in world affairs?

PM: Yes, I believe it is. I think at all levels of political activity it is very salutary that you never overstate significance and importance and certainly therefore as far as Australia is concerned while we believe we have a worthwhile and significant contribution to make to the affairs of the region and also generally in the international sphere, we don't delude ourselves that we have capacities and influence beyond those that, in fact, we have. Now I think that sort of salutary reminder that we always give ourselves is one that the Commonwealth should also give itself. But nevertheless when you are talking about the Commonwealth you are talking about a very large number of nations representing a very significant proportion of the world's population. And I think we are able to take positions, do things to some extent which can be helpful in producing better more equitable resolutions to problems. For instance, I think in regard to our last meeting in 1983 we were able, in regard to the Grenada question, to play a useful conciliatory role that had some effect there. In regard to the 1985 CHOGM, I believe, I certainly hope that the sorts of things that we will be able to say constructively as well as in terms of looking at developing sanctions possibly, that what we will be able to say and do in regard to South Africa will be useful in giving a lead to the rest of the world.

JOURNALIST: It certainly seems that the black and white Commonwealth generally is going to be in a way more cohesive on the issue of sanctions than it has been on pretty well anything else for quite a long time. Do you see at the end of this conference that the Commonwealth could be seen as even more strong, with Britain as it were, painted into a corner?

PM: Well I certainly am not going to CHOGM on the basis of trying to paint Britain into a corner. That is neither politically sensible nor in terms of achieving results a very sensible to do. But I will, for one, be about trying to explain to the meeting and if that means particularly to Britain, therefore let it be so to Britain, that there are certain moral considerations here which I believe transcend everything else. And that a proper analysis and consideration of those considerations inexorably lead to certain conclusions. Now I would like to use the powers of persuasion that I am going to have at my disposal to lead Britain to see that in these terms it is much better if the whole of the rest of the Commonwealth is right and that they are not right on this issue. I mean, it would be quite remarkable if you had a situation in the Commonwealth where everyone else had a

particular point of view and Britain had another. It would be a pretty remarkable exercise in logic to think that everyone else was wrong and that they were right.

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister, thank you very much indeed.

PM: Thank you very much.