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PRIME MINISTER

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW FOR NBC TODAY SHOW WITH JANE PAULEY

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PAULEY: As if it were possible, world events have become even more turbulent in the last several weeks making friends all the more critical. Australia is an important friend and ally. Australia's Prime Minister, Bob Hawke, is in Washington for a visit. He joins us from there. Good morning, Mr Prime Minister.

PM: Good morning, Jane.

PAULEY: You have certainly chosen an interesting week to visit Washington. Have you been pressed to endorse the action in Libya Monday night?

PM: No, we haven't been pressed on that at all. We made our statement in Canberra before we left. We made a very clear statement in the United Nations on Thursday and our conversation with the President and other members of the Administration have reflected their understanding of those statements.

PAULEY: Your statements are, well let's say ambiguous. I think the Administration interprets them as support, but could I ask you directly, do you support the Administration's air strike against Libya?

PM: You could ask me directly, and my answer is that the statement shows quite clearly our understanding of the basis upon which the United States took their action. I had the opportunity, as has my Foreign Minister, of seeing the evidence. I regard the evidence as authentic and compelling. Having said that we understand that basis, we have said that we don't like seeing force as a basis of the resolution of conflict. Our concern, Jane, is to look to the future and to say that the ending of terrorism, the direction and the export and control of terrorism by Libya is an essential condition to bring an end to this conflict.

PAULEY: Your neighbour and mutual alliance partner New Zealand has threatened the continuity of the ANZUS with its anti-nuclear government. I understand there is a significant anti-nuclear movement growing, even your own political party. Is it all right for us to say that?

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PM: What Jane?

PAULEY: Catching, what some have called the New Zealand fever, the anti-nuclear fever?

PM: -No, that exists in our country. It exists in every free country in the world. It is not particularly allowed to flourish behind the Iron Curtain, but in all democracies you have got it. In our country, we are quite unequivocal, as a Government and a clear majority of the Australian people, we are in favour of ANZUS. It is going to stay in place. We don't agree with the New Zealand position. If they continue their position and put it into legislation, the President of the United States and I will exchange letters of intent which will maintain the operation of the ANZUS between Australia and the United States.

PAULEY: Your business here, I think, is agriculture first and foremost. Is Australia getting caught in a squeeze play between western Europe and the United States in agriculture?

PM: Yes, we are. And not only are we being hurt in the process. We have lost about a billion dollars a year in the last five years as a result of what the Europeans have done. The United States, in a sense understandably, is now going into the business of trying to out-subsidise Europe. That can't go on because in the end, the tax payers pockets and the United States are just going to be dipped into more and more, which is going totally corrupt the international trading regime. And decent and efficient producers like Australia are going to suffer. And that is why I have said to the President, and he has agreed, that the United States has to take the lead with our support in the new multi-lateral trade negotiations which commence later this year, Jane, to have agriculture right up there on the agenda to see that you can have a new international trading regime where efficient producers are going to be able a reasonable price for their product.

PAULEY: Prime Minister Hawke, thank you for joining us. We look forward to seeing you in Australia come next year.

PM: Thank you and we are looking forward to seeing you all there. And I hope you are up there against us in the Cup.

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