



**THE INTERNATIONAL  
YEAR OF PEACE —  
AUSTRALIA'S  
CONTRIBUTION**

**An Address to Parliament by the Prime Minister,  
the Hon. R.J.L. Hawke, A.C., M.P.**

**28 November 1986**

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STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER  
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As 1986 draws to a close, and as the Parliament prepares to conclude its deliberations for the year, I take this opportunity to review for the House the efforts made by the Government and the Australian community to advance the objectives of the International Year of Peace.

It has been a year in which the Australian community has given vigorous and articulate expression to its desire to help build a more peaceful world.

At the same time, 1986 has been a year in which Australians have been given greater grounds for hope than for many years that the threat of nuclear war will be significantly diminished.

EAST-WEST RELATIONS

Before dealing with our national contribution to the IYP, let me say something about the international background to Australia's efforts.

In a speech at the University of New England in September I said that historic opportunities existed for the restoration of stability and realistic understanding between the superpowers. There was the prospect of less suspicion and tension than had been the case for a decade.

Subsequently, the renewed intensity of negotiations on nuclear and space arms found dramatic expression at the meeting in Reykjavik between President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev.

Naturally, there was disappointment in Australia and around the world at the failure in Reykjavik to reach final agreement on the truly breathtaking set of proposals which was discussed there. We should recognise, however, that during 1986 a fundamental transformation has occurred in the nature of the superpower dialogue on security issues. The United States and the Soviet Union have begun to cut through to the very essence of the profound differences that separate them in these negotiations.

Significant in this regard was the successful outcome in Stockholm at the Conference on Confidence and Security Building measures and Disarmament in Europe. This, the first East-West accord in security matters in seven years, indicated a new determination to restore momentum to the process of arms control and disarmament after years of stalemate.

Significantly, the Stockholm agreement also saw the acceptance for the first time by the Soviet Union and its allies of a system of mandatory on-site inspections to verify compliance with the information-exchange provisions. Greater openness in such matters is essential if real progress is to be made in disarmament and arms control.

The road ahead will not be easy. But I have no doubt that we are on the right road and I believe there are grounds to be optimistic that the superpowers are determined to stay on it.

Australia has received regular and detailed briefings from the United States on progress in these matters and the Government has taken full advantage of numerous opportunities to inject our views at the highest levels on both-sides on how progress might be further achieved. We will continue to urge progress with all the force we have.

As I have frequently said, I do not exaggerate Australia's role and influence in these matters. But it is our firm conviction that we have the right and responsibility to be heard on issues of peace, arms control and disarmament. And we have been.

Notwithstanding our differences with the United States on some issues of principle such as the Strategic Defence Initiative, the very healthy state of our relationship has enabled us to maintain a close and productive dialogue with Washington. And, while not seeking to ignore the gulf in strategic orientation and ideological perception which separates us from the Soviet Union, we have restored sensible contact with Moscow, without which any Australian arms control and disarmament policy would be meaningless.

I have written on several occasions to President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev this year, making clear the importance that the Australian Government attaches to continued compliance with the SALT II Treaty. I conveyed our view that the Soviet Union has a case to answer on specific compliance issues, but that Australia was no less concerned at the US announcement in May that future decisions on the structure of its strategic forces would no longer be bound by SALT II limitations.

We will continue to make our voice heard.

In a variety of other ways, the Government has been very active in the pursuit of peace and disarmament in 1986.

#### SOUTH PACIFIC NUCLEAR FREE ZONE (SPNFZ) TREATY

This year marks a historic moment for disarmament in the South Pacific.

When the Senate passes the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty Bill and related legislation currently before it, Australia will be in a position to ratify the Treaty of Rarotonga. Our ratification will be the eighth, and will bring the Treaty into force.

Not only does the Treaty represent a major disarmament achievement, it also makes a positive contribution to regional security.

The countries of the South Pacific Forum have built upon existing international treaties to make a new treaty that will help preserve the South Pacific as it is today:

- . free from nuclear weapons stationed in the countries and territories of the region;
- . free from nuclear waste dumping; and
- . with the tragic (and we hope temporary) exception of French Polynesia, free from nuclear testing.

All the countries of the region want to preserve these freedoms and that is the central purpose of the Treaty.

In this context, the Government is very pleased that countries of the South Pacific, along with the United States and France, agreed in principle on 25 November to adopt the text of a Convention for the Protection and Development of the Natural Resources and Environment of the South Pacific Region (the SPREP Convention).

The Convention complements the Treaty of Rarotonga's prohibition on radioactive waste dumping at sea in the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone.

The Treaty does not seek to undermine the favorable security environment which the South Pacific enjoys. It does not in any way conflict with Australia's defence arrangements, notably ANZUS.

On the contrary, the Treaty of Rarotonga seeks to build on the factors that have created and sustained the security of the region to help ensure that the South Pacific, unlike other parts of the world, does not in the future become a theatre for nuclear confrontation.

The Protocols to the Treaty adopted in final form by the South Pacific Forum in August this year will be open for signature on 1 December. These provide for the United States, the United Kingdom and France to apply provisions of the Treaty to their South Pacific Territories and for the nuclear-weapon states (the United States, the USSR, the United Kingdom, France and China) to undertake not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against parties to the Treaty nor to conduct nuclear testing in the South Pacific.

It is the Government's strong hope that all the eligible states, which have major responsibility for international peace and security, will adhere to the Protocols to the Treaty of Rarotonga.

The significance of the Bill before the Senate goes further than clearing the way for the entry into force of the Treaty of Rarotonga, important though that is. For, in passing the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty Bill, Australia will become the first independent, sovereign country in the world to make a commitment by national legislation against the nuclear weapons option.

The Bill commits this and future Governments to prohibit the manufacture, acquisition and possession of nuclear explosive devices and the stationing and testing of such devices within Australia's territory. We take great pride in this stand.

It is deeply regrettable that the Opposition in this House, and no doubt in the Senate, saw fit to oppose this historic declaration of principle.

#### COMPREHENSIVE TEST BAN

During 1986, the Australian Government has continued to attach the highest priority in our multilateral disarmament diplomacy to the conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear test ban (CTB).

Such a treaty would ban all kinds of nuclear tests in all environments by all countries for all time. It is a feasible and negotiable proposal whose implementation would be an important step towards preventing horizontal and vertical proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Earlier this month, the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly voted on several resolutions dealing with nuclear testing. Two of these resolutions were sponsored by Australia and both received overwhelming support.

The first was the Australia-New Zealand resolution on a comprehensive test ban which reaffirms the fundamental importance of such a treaty and sets out a program of action to achieve it. Five CTB resolutions were considered by the Committee this year. Australia's resolution, which has the best chances of contributing to a nuclear-free world, received 117 positive votes, the highest number of any of the five.

The Australia-New Zealand resolution was co-sponsored by 26 countries including Sweden, Canada and Japan. The United States and Britain, who had opposed our resolution in 1985, abstained this year. Only France voted against. This excellent result reflected the international community's acknowledgement of Australia's realistic approach and deep commitment to the early conclusion of a CTB Treaty.

The second Australian resolution considered this year calls on the nuclear testing states to make public each test and to provide certain data including the size of the test and the geology of the test site. This was a new initiative and the resolution received 107 positive votes. Only one country - France - opposed the resolution.

#### CHEMICAL WEAPONS

The abolition of chemical weapons has long been a high priority objective of the Australian Government's arms control and disarmament policies. We have made special efforts during 1986 to facilitate progress on effective international measures against such abhorrent weapons. Australia is at the forefront of international action to this end.

The Australian Government is committed to the early conclusion of a comprehensive Chemical Weapons Convention which would ban the production, stockpiling and use of all chemical weapons and provide for the destruction of all existing stocks of chemical weapons and their production facilities.

We have been prominent at both the diplomatic and technical levels in the negotiations on chemical weapons at the Conference on Disarmament. During 1986 Australia chaired one of the Conference's three working groups on chemical weapons which made considerable progress. We have also actively supported and participated in investigations by the UN Secretary-General into reports of the use of chemical weapons.

We have instituted controls on the export of particular chemicals which could be used in the manufacture of chemical weapons. In addition, Australia convened consultations during 1986 with eighteen Western countries (known as the 'Australia Group') which have adopted similar controls with a view to co-ordinating such measures internationally.

These outstanding results in the cause of peace and disarmament were only made possible by the strong and sustained commitment of the Government to achieving real progress on arms control, a field in which little can be done without detailed expertise in the issues, international acceptance of the contribution we can make and the skills of sensitive diplomacy and negotiation.

The Government, from the moment it came to office, set about establishing for the first time in Australia's history, the necessary credentials for successful work in the field of disarmament.

The highest credit for our success belongs to my colleague, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Bill Hayden, whose skill, initiative and energy have won him worldwide respect and regard.

I should also acknowledge the efforts of our officials in the Department of Foreign Affairs, and those of our Ambassador for Disarmament.

#### IDEALS OF THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF PEACE

So far, I have talked about the international background to the International Year of Peace and the Government's own disarmament activities.

In resolving to give its strong support to the United Nations' designation of 1986 as the International Year of Peace (IYP), the Government reaffirmed the high priority it has consistently placed on arms control and disarmament but, at the same time, agreed with the view of the United Nations that IYP activities should not be sponsored only at the level of national governments.

Accordingly, the Government sought to encourage the wide range of individuals and community organisations in Australia who had set high value on the opportunities this year offered them to express their views and make their own contribution to the debate.

The search for international peace habitually attracts close attention from both cynics and utopians. Cynics say that military confrontation is inevitable and that no generation in history has been totally free from the threat of war. For their part, utopians are so eager for peace that they trust the panaceas of unilateral disarmament and isolationism, ignoring the unfortunate history of such policies.

The view of this Government, however, is that to work for real peace is neither to ignore reality nor to neglect security.

During the IYP, I have witnessed again and again the yearning for peace among people in Australia, especially our young people. I have heard their conviction that there are better alternatives to the threats under which we live and that there are better uses for human and material resources than the accumulation of weapons.

We believe that the IYP has provided a timely opportunity for people throughout the world to find ways of achieving progress towards the peace we all seek.

#### IYP PROGRAM

The planning of the IYP program fell within the portfolio of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Bill Hayden, and, again, he deserves full credit for his determination that the noble idea behind the IYP was fully and appropriately celebrated in Australia.



To assist him in planning and implementing the program Mr Hayden appointed Mrs Stella Cornelius, the prominent community activist, as IYP Director. He also established IYP Committees both at the National level and in each of the States and Territories with members drawn from a broad range of community organisations.

I should like to take this opportunity of paying tribute to Mrs Cornelius' tireless and dedicated work for the objectives of the IYP and to the members of the various committees who gave so freely of their time and energy to make the program a success. I should also like to acknowledge the generous support given to the IYP by State Governments.

The Government approved a budget of \$3.15 million for the IYP Program in Australia. These funds were divided on a roughly equal basis between three main components of the program:

- . information and advertising;
- . a series of Government projects;
- . and in recognition of the vital role of the community, \$1,050,000 to support non-government projects.

You will have seen the IYP advertisements on radio and television. Those advertisements were designed to relate to peace in all its meanings, and to counter despair and apathy with the message that, while peace is not easy to achieve, it is not impossible and every attempt at progress is a "Step in the Right Direction".

The media campaign was complemented by the production and wide distribution of 20,000 Peace Kits containing detailed information on Australia's role and achievements in disarmament and arms control and suggestions as to ways in which local communities might participate in the program.

In order to encourage better public understanding of the complexities of international arms control, the Government sponsored a number of projects, which included a series of public arms control and disarmament seminars in State capital cities and an international symposium on Seismic Verification, a vital technical precondition for a possible Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

The Government's IYP program was officially launched by the "Overture of Peace", a concert by over 2000 NSW school students which was televised nationally in February. As an optimistic, joyful celebration of peace it was a fitting beginning to the year.

That event also symbolised the strong connection the Government saw between the International Year of Peace and the immediately preceding International Year of Youth.

The enthusiasm and commitment of our young people for the goal of peace obvious at that occasion asserted itself again at His Holiness the Pope's peace rally in Sydney on Tuesday night.

Just over a month ago I presented Australian Peace Awards to Australians who had made outstanding contributions to peace in many areas of activity. In establishing these Awards during the IYP, the Government sought to give fitting recognition to both the quality and diversity of community achievements in work for a peaceful future.

These same elements were also reflected to an overwhelming degree in the non-government IYP projects organised and carried out by individuals and community organisations in every part of the country. Many of these received financial support from the Federal Government. I am also aware of many more community projects which have been mounted quite independently of any Government assistance.

Non-government projects for the IYP have involved the Churches, peace groups, academics, the Aboriginal community, artists, teachers, school students, welfare organisations, ethnic groups, women's organisations, the RSL, service clubs, trade unions and many others. The projects have included conferences and seminars, theatrical performances and concerts, publications, videos, educational and research programs. They have taken place in every part of Australia, from the largest cities to the smallest rural towns.

So impressive was this response to the IYP that the UN Secretary-General sent a personal message commending Australian community groups for their enthusiasm and commitment. Three UN Secretariat officials who visited Australia to familiarise themselves with our IYP program were particularly impressed with its unique combination of Government and non-government activities.

It is clear from this great community response that the IYP has been a great success in Australia. Not only have Australians become more aware of why they should care about international events around them but they have also demonstrated their strong concern to leave the world at peace for the benefit of future generations.

What has been achieved this year is a firmer basis for continuing work for peace in the future both by the Government and the Australian community as a whole. The heightened awareness of the issues and sense of responsibility for a world of peace which the IYP has generated will not end on 31 December 1986.

I would like to address some concluding words to young Australians, who more than any of us, have made their concerns about peace felt this year and whose responsibility it will be in the future to shoulder the burden of securing peace.

I have already mentioned that I spoke earlier this year to an audience at the University of New England in Armidale. Let me conclude now as I concluded then.

"Do not succumb to the paralysis of despair. It would be a tragedy if our young people, in particular, were to be so weighed down at the remote prospect of nuclear war as not to care adequately about their own self development or to contribute to our society in a positive and energetic way.

Seek to decode the often confusing language of arms control, its acronyms and its technical jargon. Do not allow the so-called experts to monopolise the debate.

Inform yourselves fully about the difficult international issues involved. Effective arms control will only come about through incremental, careful and patiently negotiated steps. Do not become overwhelmed by pessimism at the sometimes glacial speed of progress in disarmament negotiations.

Above all, do not fail to let the political leadership of this country, and of the international community, know of your desire for tangible progress towards a saner, safer world."

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