

EMBARGOED MIDNIGHT AEST 27 JANUARY 1987

SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER  
AT DINNER GIVEN BY THE PRIME MINISTER OF ISRAEL  
MR YITZHAK SHAMIR  
JERUSALEM, 27 JANUARY 1987

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MR PRIME MINISTER, DISTINGUISHED GUESTS

TODAY IS AN HISTORIC OCCASION FOR AUSTRALIA AND ISRAEL AND  
A VERY IMPORTANT ONE FOR ME.

DURING MY EARLIER VISITS TO ISRAEL, I FORMED NOT ONLY CLOSE  
FRIENDSHIPS BUT ALSO A DEEP APPRECIATION OF THE GREAT  
ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE ISRAELI PEOPLE.

I WAS THEREFORE ESPECIALLY PLEASED TO BE ABLE TO ACCEPT THE  
RENEWED INVITATION CONVEYED BY PRESIDENT HERZOG DURING HIS  
SUCCESSFUL VISIT TO AUSTRALIA LAST NOVEMBER.

MY VISIT TO ISRAEL IS THE FIRST BY AN AUSTRALIAN PRIME  
MINISTER. LIKE THAT OF PRESIDENT HERZOG TO AUSTRALIA IT  
SYMBOLISES THE CLOSE AND WARM LINKS BETWEEN OUR PEOPLES.

MR PRIME MINISTER

AUSTRALIA HAS ALWAYS BEEN A FRIEND OF ISRAEL.

2.

THE AUSTRALIAN PEOPLE AND, I MIGHT ADD, THE AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY, HAD A SPECIAL AFFINITY WITH ISRAEL FROM THE TIME OF YOUR ESTABLISHMENT, IN WHICH OUR THEN FOREIGN MINISTER, DR EVATT, PLAYED AN IMPORTANT ROLE.

AS I TOLD PRESIDENT HERZOG IN CANBERRA, WE ARE PROUD OF THE FACT THAT THE FIRST "YES" VOTE FOR ISRAEL'S RIGHT TO EXIST WAS CAST BY AUSTRALIA AT THE DIRECTION OF THE CHIFLEY GOVERNMENT. THAT GOVERNMENT WAS ONE OF THE FIRST TO EXTEND RECOGNITION TO THE NEW STATE OF ISRAEL.

SO DESPITE THE GEOGRAPHIC DISTANCES WHICH SEPARATE US, AUSTRALIANS ARE DEEPLY COMMITTED TO YOUR WELFARE AND CLOSELY ATTENTIVE TO DEVELOPMENTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

WE ARE CERTAINLY NOT A PARTY PRINCIPAL IN THE RESOLUTION OF THE ISSUES WHICH SEPARATE ISRAEL AND ITS NEIGHBOURS. YET WE ARE SENSITIVE TO THOSE ISSUES AND HAVE ENDORSED CLEARLY DEFINED PRINCIPLES WHICH WE BELIEVE CONTAIN THE ELEMENTS OF A PEACEFUL AND DURABLE RESOLUTION.

WE REMAIN FUNDAMENTALLY COMMITTED TO THE SECURITY OF ISRAEL AND ITS RIGHT TO EXIST WITHIN SECURE AND RECOGNISED BOUNDARIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS 242 AND 338.

3.

THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT BELIEVES THAT A RESOLUTION OF THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION IS CENTRAL TO ANY MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT. WE ACKNOWLEDGE THE RIGHT OF SELF-DETERMINATION FOR THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE, INCLUDING THE RIGHT, IF THEY SO CHOOSE, TO INDEPENDENCE AND THE POSSIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING THEIR OWN INDEPENDENT STATE.

THAT POSSIBILITY WAS OPEN BEFORE 1967, BUT AT THAT TIME THERE WAS NO ACCEPTANCE OF THE CONCEPT OF A PALESTINIAN STATE WHICH DID NOT INVOLVE THE DISAPPEARANCE OF ISRAEL. THE WORLD KNOWS THAT ISRAEL IS NOT GOING TO DISAPPEAR.

YOUR NEIGHBOURS WHO ARE PART OF MY ITINERARY, ACCEPT AND WORK WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THAT FACT. EQUALLY, I BELIEVE, ON THE BASIS OF THE SAME FACT, ISRAEL MUST BE CONSTRUCTIVELY INVOLVED IN THE PROCESSES OF RESOLVING THE ASPIRATIONS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE.

WE RECOGNISE THAT WHATEVER ARRANGEMENTS ARE FINALLY SETTLED WILL DEPEND ON DECISIONS INVOLVING THE PARTICIPATION AND AGREEMENT OF ALL PARTIES CONCERNED.

ONLY A FOOL COULD PRETEND THAT EASY SOLUTIONS EXIST. BUT THAT IS A REASON NOT FOR GIVING UP BUT FOR STRIVING HARDER.

THE GOVERNMENT OF WHICH YOU WERE AN IMPORTANT MEMBER TOOK A MAJOR STEP IN THAT DIRECTION WHEN IN 1978 IT CONCLUDED THE CAMP DAVID ACCORDS AND IN 1979 SIGNED A PEACE TREATY WITH ITS SOUTHERN NEIGHBOUR, EGYPT. WE APPLAUD THE COURAGE AND FORESIGHT INVOLVED IN THAT DECISION.

WE WELCOME TOO, THE RECENT AGREEMENT BETWEEN ISRAEL AND EGYPT ON THE TERMS OF ARBITRATION FOR TABA. WE HOPE THAT THE RESOLUTION OF THIS LONG-STANDING DISPUTE WILL OPEN THE WAY FOR FURTHER IMPROVEMENT IN RELATIONS BETWEEN YOUR COUNTRIES.

~~THE MEETING BETWEEN MR PERES AND PRESIDENT MUBARAK IN ALEXANDRIA LAST SEPTEMBER GIVE US REASON TO BE OPTIMISTIC.~~

AT THAT MEETING THE ISRAELI AND EGYPTIAN GOVERNMENTS ALSO DECLARED 1987 AS THE YEAR OF NEGOTIATIONS FOR PEACE. I LOOK FORWARD TO DISCUSSING WITH PRESIDENT MUBARAK NEXT WEEK HIS OWN PERCEPTIONS AS TO HOW THE PROCESS MIGHT BE DEVELOPED.

AS YOU KNOW, I HAVE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS THESE MATTERS WITH KING HUSSEIN. AND OUR OWN DISCUSSIONS THIS AFTERNOON HAVE HELPED ME TO A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF THE ISRAELI POSITION ON THESE VITALLY IMPORTANT ISSUES.

LOOKING AT THE MIDDLE EAST REGION AS A WHOLE, THE QUESTION OF THE PALESTINIANS IS NOT THE ONLY UNRESOLVED ISSUE WE CONFRONT. THE SITUATION IN LEBANON CONTINUES TO BE A MATTER OF DEEP CONCERN TO US ALL. WHAT WE ARE SEEING IS FAR MORE THAN A REGIONAL POLITICAL PROBLEM, IT IS A HUMAN TRAGEDY.

WE WISH FOR A CESSATION OF THE DISTRUST AND VIOLENCE WHICH HAS WROUGHT SO MUCH HAVOC AND DISRUPTED THE LIVES OF SO MANY PEOPLE. IN SAYING THAT, I SPEAK NOT JUST FOR AUSTRALIANS OF LEBANESE ORIGIN BUT FOR ALL AUSTRALIANS.

5.

IT IS OUR HOPE THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF LEBANON WILL BE ABLE TO RECONCILE DIFFERENCES AMONG THE MANY COMMUNITIES WHICH MAKE UP THE COMPLEX FABRIC OF LEBANON AND THAT IT WILL BE ABLE AGAIN TO EXTEND ITS AUTHORITY OVER THE WHOLE COUNTRY.

THE OBJECTIVE SHOULD BE THE WITHDRAWAL OF ALL FOREIGN FORCES, EXCEPT THOSE FOREIGN FORCES WHICH ARE IN LEBANON AT THE REQUEST OF THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT AND WHOSE PRESENCE IS NECESSARY TO ALLOW THE DEVELOPMENT OF CONDITIONS WHICH CAN ALLOW SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL STABILITY TO BE RE-ESTABLISHED WITHIN LEBANON AND THE AUTHORITY OF THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT TO BE ASSERTED.

MR PRIME MINISTER

I AM VERY PLEASED THAT MY COLLEAGUES THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE AND THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES HAVE INVITED THE SPEAKER OF THE KNESSET TO LEAD AN ISRAELI PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION TO AUSTRALIA.

A NUMBER OF OUR MINISTERS HAVE VISITED ISRAEL AND I ENJOYED HEARING FROM THEM AT FIRST-HAND OF DEVELOPMENTS WHICH HAVE OCCURRED SINCE MY LAST VISIT.

I AM HAPPY TO SAY THAT THE AUSTRALIAN PARLIAMENT ON 23 OCTOBER LAST CALLED FOR THE OVER-TURNING OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION EQUATING ZIONISM WITH RACISM. I MIGHT ADD, WITH PRIDE, THAT IN A PARLIAMENT OFTEN NOTED MORE FOR ITS CONFRONTATION THAN CONSENSUS, THIS RESOLUTION WAS PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

MR PRIME MINISTER

NEXT YEAR BOTH OUR COUNTRIES WILL CELEBRATE IMPORTANT ANNIVERSARIES - IT WILL BE 40 YEARS SINCE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL AND 200 YEARS SINCE THE START OF EUROPEAN SETTLEMENT OF AUSTRALIA. DISCUSSIONS ARE WELL ADVANCED ON WAYS IN WHICH THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL AND AUSTRALIA CAN PARTICIPATE IN EACH OTHERS' CELEBRATIONS OF THOSE IMPORTANT EVENTS.

FINALLY, SIR, I WOULD BE REMISS IF I FAILED TO MENTION AUSTRALIA'S SUBSTANTIAL JEWISH COMMUNITY, AND ITS INVALUABLE CONTRIBUTION TO OUR MULTICULTURAL NATION IN PRACTICALLY EVERY FIELD OF HUMAN ENDEAVOUR. THEY FORM A BRIDGE OF FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN AUSTRALIA AND ISRAEL.

IT IS PERSONAL LINKS BETWEEN OUR PEOPLE WHICH WILL ACHIEVE MORE THAN GOVERNMENTS CAN IN FIRING THE BONDS BETWEEN US.

7.

I AM CONFIDENT WE CAN LOOK FORWARD TO THE FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF THESE LINKS: THROUGH GOVERNMENT-SPONSORED ACTIVITIES CERTAINLY, BUT MORE ESPECIALLY THROUGH OUR UNIVERSITIES, OUR CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS, THROUGH SPORT, COMMERCIAL LINKS AND TOURISM.

IT IS MY HOPE THAT THE LINKS BETWEEN OUR PEOPLES AND THE CO-OPERATION BETWEEN OUR COUNTRIES CAN CONTINUE TO OUR MUTUAL ADVANTAGE.

IT IS MY FIRM BELIEF THAT THEY WILL.

MR PRIME MINISTER

MAY I NOW PROPOSE A TOAST TO THE GOVERNMENT OF ISRAEL AND TO THE CONTINUING FRIENDSHIP OF THE PEOPLES OF ISRAEL AND AUSTRALIA.

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