



PRIME MINISTER

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E & O E - PROOF ONLY

JOURNALIST: Mr Hawke, did you urge Mr Shamir to accept the Soviet Union and the PLO in an international peace conference?

PM: I put to the Prime Minister that I believe the concept of the international conference had merit. And that means that I also indicated in that context there is a place for the Soviet Union as part of that process. As far as the PLO was concerned, I didn't go specifically to that. It is quite clear that the question of the PLO is- something that will have to be determined in the processes of discussions between the parties as they go further down the path with peace processes. Clearly, the position of myself and my Government is that the capacity of the PLO to play a role in these processes depends on their preparednes to recognise the right of Israel and that is done most desirably, of course, by an amendment to their charter which calls for the destruction of Israel. Alternatively, in terms of the approach that King Hussein was pursing between February of 1985 and February 1986. The recognition on their part of the resolutions 242 and 338 constituting a basis for negotiation.

JOURNALIST: What was Mr Shamir's response?

PM: The Prime Minister repeated his position that they didn't like the idea of an international conference - that was a matter essentially for negotiation between the parties directly concerned. I put the view to him that we would not see, and as I understood the Jordanian position, they would not see the conference as imposing solutions upon the parties within the framework of an international conference properly convened on agreement between the parties that it would provide a framework within which discussions between the parties would take place. Because it is obviously the case that in the end no agreement is going to be - no viable agreement is going to emerge except out of negotiations between the parties. But an international conference could provide a framework. I raised the question of the resumption of diplomatic relations between the Soviet Union and Israel and some change in the attitude of the Soviet Union and the treatment of Soviet Jewry. And the Prime Minister indicated that in the event that these things were to happen then that could constitute a changed position within which there would be a place for the Soviet Union in the processes concernir the achievement of a peaceful resolution of the Israeli ...

JOURNALIST: Has he asked you play any role?

PM: No, he hasn't asked me to play a role.

JOURNALIST: Do you see a role for yourself?

PM: No, I don't push a role for myself but I merely indicated again to Prime Minister Shamir as I did to the King of Jordan and the Prime Minister of Jordan that if there was any way in which Australia could be of assistance, however small, we stood ready to be of assistance. And the Prime Minister noted that with appreciation.

JOURNALIST: Is it possible that Mr Sheverdnadze will come if and when he comes to Australia?

PM: Of course I will discuss these issues with Mr Sheverdnadze if and when he comes to Australia.

JOURNALIST: Mr Hawke, could I raise the subject of the visit to Australia by Mr Ariel Sharon. Does it concern you that there could be some controversy and concern amongst Australians by that visit? Have you been concerned by it?

PM: Obviously there could be some concerns about that but all I can say is that that hasn't been a matter of discussion.

JOURNALIST: Will you welcome him to Australia?

PM: It won't be my role to welcome him. When Ministers come to Australia the Prime Minister doesn't meet Ministers. The Minister concerned meets and deals with Ministers.

JOURNALIST: Mr Hawke, just getting back to the Middle East talks that you had with Mr Shamir. Did you feel in any sense that his attitude was somewhat inflexible?

PM: He has got a tough position. But let me say this that I have no doubt that the Prime Minister and the Government of Israel is committed to achieving a just and durable settlement of the Israeli/Arab dispute. And I think that the Prime Minister recognises that both within Israel and outside Israel there are differences of opinion about the paths to peace, how to get there. And I would think he recognises that there is legitimate room for these differences of opinion. And I would hope that his attitude would be that if you can keep talks going in a variety of ways, including the involvement of other countries like Australia, in these sorts of discussions that gradually there is going to emerge sufficient commonality of ground to accelerate the processes. But I think what has got to be understood is that you are dealing here with a dispute of longstanding in which there are long historical and deep emotional feelings and attitudes involved. And it is somewhat unrealistic to expect them to be dissipated overnight. The important thing that I have discerned in the two countries now that I have visited - Jordan and Israel - that there is a real commitment to achieving peace. And all of us who have an interest in trying to assist in the achievement of that objective have got to keep on trying and, as I say, to try to get to a position where there can be sufficient common ground to get real negotiations going.

JOURNALIST: Could there be greater flexibility there on the part of Mr Shamir?

PM: Well, obviously one would always like to see a maximum of flexibility but it's not for me to come here and tell the Prime Minister of this country by public exposition how he should conduct himself. The proper ways of conducting these affairs are by quiet and diplomatic discussion and by enabling the parties involved, in these case Israel to understand the integrity of the way in which you put a position and I am certain that Mr Shamir understands and accepts the full integrity of Australia's position in this matter.

JOURNALIST: Do you think that he was at all impressed? I assume that you put to him your impressions of the Jordanian visit. You made it very clear that you were impressed by their integrity. Do you think that you made an impact on him at all?

PM: Yes, I think I did, because as you would appreciate that some two and a half hours of discussions with the Prime Minister, and then some informal discussions and over three hours with the King, I did have a fairly unique opportunity of getting the most up to date detailed exposition of the Jordanian position, and yes, I do think I was able to impress Mr Shamir, firstly, with the total integrity and commitment of the Jordanians to wanting to achieve a just, reasonable and durable peace between Israel and their Arab neighbours. I have certainly succeeded in conveying that, and I think I also succeeded in conveying to Mr Shamir the reason behind Jordan's thinking as to the appropriate processes, as to why Jordan saw an international conference as a necessary part of those processes.

JOURNALIST: Do you see any prospect of Mr Shamir moving on this matter? Was he at all impressed by your arguments about the conflict of the framework of that matter?

PM: Well, you will have to ask Mr Shamir if you have the opportunity. You would have to ask him as to what impression I had upon him in expressing the views that I did. But what you have got to understand when you are talking about Mr Shamir's views and positions is that he is the leader of a coalition government and that within that Government - he readily acknowledges as there is within Israel as a whole, there are differences of opinion, and he acknowledges that there are diversities and legitimate differences of opinion, so the processes of going down this tortuous path to peace, the processes not only between Israel and her neighbours and other countries who are interested in this issue but it is also a question of processes within Israel.

JOURNALIST: Do you think that Mr Peres has it right, that his position seems to be very similar to yours?

PM: As yet, Greg, I haven't had the opportunity as you would appreciate of talking with Shimon Peres, he returns to Israel tomorrow, and I will have the opportunity of fairly lengthy discussions with him during tomorrow afternoon and tomorrow evening at the dinner that he is giving for me. I suppose it is obvious from what Mr Peres has said publicly, I suppose it is obvious from the reports of the meetings at Alexandria last year

between Prime Minister Peres, as he then was, and President Mubarak that there is a greater degree of similarity between what he has been saying and the view that I have about what will be necessary to get these processes going effectively and let me make it quite clear I don't come to Israel in any sense to try and exacerbate any differences that there may be between the Prime Minister and his Foreign Minister. That would be counter-productive. In the end these processes are going to have a chance of working, then there has to be an Israeli position, and the achievement of that position is properly for the processes of this government.

JOURNALIST: Did you urge the Prime Minister to stop the settlements program in the West Bank, and secondly, did you urge Israel to sign the non-proliferation treaty?

PM: Well, taking the first part of your question, it is fairly obvious, the direct answer to your question is I didn't say that, I didn't go to the issue and say please stop the settlement. I make the point that in so far as we are talking about the rights of self-determination for the Palestinians with the possibilities of an independent state emerging and then I will be saying that the view that's emerged to me from discussions in Jordan as to the most likely outcome of those processes would be a form of confederation with Jordan. I mean it follows from that, that our statement and policies beforehand about the five-year settlements is understood. Now the second part of your question about non-proliferation, I did discuss that matter with the Prime Minister Shamir. I said to the Prime Minister that Australia which has an alliance relationship with the United States, has nevertheless consistently since we've been in Government, pursued the cause of disarmament, or vigorously perhaps in the pursuit in the other issue in the international sphere, and I pointed out to him the commitment that we have to the NPT and that we saw this as an important part of the progress on the part of realistic and verifiable disarmament. And said to him specifically that we would regard it as appropriate for Israel to consider an adherence to the NPT. The response of the Prime Minister was an interesting, and I think, an important one. He recognised Australia's interest, and proper interests in these matters. He said that the position of Israel was this: that they had offered and their position had remained this - to the states in the region. They, Israel, want the states in the region to sign an agreement to which Israel would be party, renouncing the acquisition and utilisation of nuclear weapons, and he said to me that if the states of the region were prepared to sign such an agreement that's what Israel would do, and I asked whether that would be within the framework of the NPT and he said it was conceivable it could be within that framework but what was important was that it had to be a real agreement, a resourceful agreement, and it would probably need even more than the NPT.

JOURNALIST: Did Mr Shamir actually ask you for your agreement of representation from the Soviet Union?

PM: He raised the question of not only the release of Soviet Jews, but the treatment of Jews within the Soviet Union, and asked me and the Government to do whatever we could in that

regard. And he did that in the context of expressing his gratitude for all that I and the Government and had done in that respect. I said to him that both I and Bill Hayden had consistently since we've been in Government at every appropriate opportunity raised these issues and that we will continue to do so.

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister, did Mr Shamir indicate to you the Arab countries had agreed to sign an agreement on the nuclear weapons, that Israel might be prepared to dismantle its nuclear armaments program?

PM: Well, it seemed to me to follow logically that this was an agreement which he wished to see, then that would follow. I didn't ask him what the extent of their program was, we have seen the public reports. But obviously it follows logically that if there was to be a signed agreement that there was to be no acquisition, no utilisation, then the extent that any state was in a current situation which was not consistent with such a treaty, then they would have to take the steps to become consistent with the treaty.

JOURNALIST: Did you know about the Sharon visit, at the time of the invitation from the Trade Minister?

PM: Not immediately, no. You know the way I run this Government, that I don't stand over my Ministers, and say before you make decisions which are legitimately within your portfolio.

JOURNALIST: sensitive

PM: Yes, but there are a lots of things that happen which are sensitive, and part of the strength of my government is that Minister's know that I have confidence in them and I'm not an interfering Prime Minister. I have said many times, and it is appropriate to say it again, that it is an extraordinarily competent Ministry it is the best Ministry by far since the war in our country. One of the reasons for its strength is not only the individual competence of the Ministers, but the relationship I have with them.

JOURNALIST: you know about it in advance ...

PM: Hey, that sounds terribly like a hypothetical question.

JOURNALIST: Do you think it damages the perception of your even-handed policy towards the Middle East, given that your Government has rejected the UN seminar in Australia, would have brought a PLO diplomat to our country?

PM: There is no comparison to a solution. We'll have to leave it there.