



## PRIME MINISTER

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW WITH ANNE-MCCAIG, 2WS, FOR STEVE-RAYMOND'S  
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E & O E -- PROOF ONLY

MCCAIG: Prime Minister your love for Israel goes back many years. What is it about that country that's captured your attention?

PM: Well it's a complex of reasons. I suppose like very very many people around the world part of it and a large and immeasurable part was the sense of shared guilt that I had that the world had allowed the annihilation of 6 million Jews in the Holocaust. And in a way we all share share some sense of responsibility. And then I understood that the world had made the decision in the immediate post war period that the Jews were entitled to have a Land, a state of their own. Australia had played a leading role in that decision through Doctor Evatt in 1947. And then when I went there the world to a very large extent was standing fairly mutely by while they witnessed the attempts of states around Israel to destroy it. And here was a democracy, as you saw it on your visit there, a remarkable democracy for instance which at that very time when its destruction was being threatened by force of Soviet arms supplied to others, allowed as part of its democratic process a Soviet oriented Communist Party. A vibrant democracy, not without its problems, not without its weaknesses. But for all those reasons I had this committment. But at all times from the beginning my views about Israel have been in association with a view that is my party's and what the government's platform says, will require also a proper resolution of the problem of the Palestinians. So my love of the Israelis as you put it has not been exclusive of a concern for the rights of others.

MCCAIG: You began this trip in Jordan and said you were convinced after meeting King Hussein of his committment to a peaceful solution. Did that visit change your perceptions of the Arab-Israeli conflict?

PM: No. I think the right way of saying it is it reinforced the feelings I had because you'll appreciate I'd had the opportunity of going to Jordan in '78 and '80. I hadn't had the opportunity of meeting the King because on both those occasions he wasn't in the country but I'd had the long meetings with his brother the Crown Prince Hassan. So what the meeting with the King and Prime Minister did was to confirm the perceptions I had then but of course on this occasion to hear in such strong language from the King and Prime Minister that committment was important. I guess the significant part of it was that it wasn't just a desire for some formal peace settlement. What they want to see is a peace settlement out of which can come constructive economic co operation between Israel and Jordan.

MCCAIG: When you went to Jerusalem after your talks in Jordan did you get the impression from the Israelis that they are any closer to peace?

PM: I think Jordan and Israel share the view that the possibility of conflict, armed conflict, has diminished. I think they both share the view that they must work at the processes of negotiation.

PM: (cont'd)

There are obviously differences of view between Jordan and Israel and to some extent within Israel as to how those processes should be pursued but I think they are both committed to getting workable processes.

MCCAIG: The other major problem is just what happens to the Palestinian people. You said in Jerusalem that recognition by Israel and the P.L.O. of each other under certain conditions was a very important building block in the work towards peace. Given your own knowledge of the area and your personal interest, aren't you well placed to kick off that process in a sense by speaking to PLO officials?

PM: Neither I nor the government would negotiate with the P.L.O. while the P.L.O. maintains its present official position. What I've been saying is that I think a part of the process of effecting the ultimate resolution of the Israeli-Arab dispute is to translate what I think are the facts into a formal statement of those facts. By that I mean that I believe that however reluctantly it is, that I think the leadership of the P.L.O. understands now as distinct from say in the 70's that Israel is here to stay. And on the other hand I think that Israel recognises that there is a representativeness or representative capacity in the P.L.O. So what I'm saying is that I think it would be useful if you could get a situation where the P.L.O. translated what I think is a fact into a public statement of that fact. That would require acceptance of 242 and 338 resolutions of the United Nations. Secondly and implicitly that follows from the first, the recognition of Israel and third, the repudiation of terrorism. And in response to that it would then be the obligation to say well in those circumstances we would treat in the overall direct negotiations with the P.L.O. as part of that process.

MCCAIG: It would be politically difficult though wouldn't it, for either party to accept the other?

PM: Well what I'm saying is that in a factual sense they both recognise the reality of each other. They don't like it but they recognise that they are there. Now what I'm saying is that it just seems to me to be useful if that sort of fact of the recognition of each other could be translated under appropriate conditions into a formal statement. That of itself is not going to solve the problem, but it seems to me that it would be useful part of creating the necessary building block for a solution.

But let me say in that...one has to take into account not only the considerations and interests of Israel vis a vis the P.L.O. but also the interests of Jordan because Jordan has its concerns about the P.L.O. as you'll appreciate.

MCCAIG: In Jerusalem you met Palestinians...and they referred to the oppressive conditions faced by refugees on the West Bank. Would it have helped your understanding to visit a refugee camp

PM: Well I have in fact visited a refugee camp.

MCCAIG: As Prime Minister though?

PM: Not as Prime Minister. I'm aware of the camps and the problems and as you know I'm sympathetic to the problems of the Palestinian people you know fully sympathetic. So you know I didn't need a visit to, I think, increase that understanding. And what I said to the Palestinian representatives I spoke to is that if they wanted to convey details to us, we would look at them and undertake to convey them to the Israeli authorities.

MCCAIG: It would have been a gesture though.

PM: Well I don't think that the processes that we're talking about are processes of gestures. I think you would have found if you talked to the four Palestinians that I spoke to, that they had no question in their mind about my understanding of their problems.

MCCAIG: Mr Hawke, Switzerland. If I can switch to the conference in Davos. Is there any joy for Australian farmers in your international trade proposals to break down protection?

PM: Well there is if they were accepted and acted upon. But I think my friends in the Australian farming community know that the resolution of these matters is not something that's going to happen overnight. There's going to be protracted discussions and negotiations involved. But I was pleased at the reaction I got to my proposals. I think you saw it was very widespread approbation of the speech and the proposals. So all I can hope is that that will serve to accelerate the processes of discussion. There are two strands if you like. There's now has been concluded in these last few days in Geneva the formal arrangements, the administrative arrangements for getting the G.A.T.T. round, the Uruguay round, going. And so there'll be protracted negotiations there. What we hope is that the proposals I put may provide some basis for more immediate moves because not only can Australian farmers afford to wait, but in a real sense the world can't afford to wait for the more protracted negotiations under the G.A.T.T. round for any progress. We certainly look to those rounds for final resolutions of difficulties, but it's in everyone's interests that there should be some more immediate steps.

MCCAIG: Finally, Prime Minister, I suppose it will be some time before you take another overseas trip because we have to go to the polls within the next 14 or 15 months. Will the election be sooner rather than later. Have you thought of a date?

PM: I've got no reason to change what I've said several times in Australia before I left...and that is the government will go its full term and that means as I've said, an election some time in the period from the end of '87 into the early part of 88.

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