



PRIME MINISTER

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**SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER
AT THE OFFICIAL DINNER IN MOSCOW
GIVEN BY PRIME MINISTER RYZHKOV
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A few weeks ago, the Soviet Union celebrated the 70th Anniversary of its revolution. Seventy years ago, an American journalist described the events of that time as "ten days that shook the world"

John Reed's words remind us that profound changes within countries as important as the Soviet Union have a meaning and impact far beyond their own borders.

Today, words and phrases such as "glasnost" and "perestroika" ring loudly in your internal debate. But they also resonate in the rest of the world. I do not remember a time in my involvement in political and public life when the information media in Australia, 14,000 miles from the USSR, have been so filled with reports, analysis and argument about what is happening in your country, and conjecture about what it means not only for the Soviet Union but for all of us.

For most of the past seventy years, East and West have been deeply divided. This division has reflected not just conflicting national interests, but fundamental differences over ideology. Many countries have made choices about where they stood in that division. Australia has chosen the values, traditions and interests of the West. Australia and the United States formed an alliance, an alliance which continues to exist today and is stronger than it has ever been.

It is important that I say to you frankly that Australians do not see this as merely a military alliance but as a partnership based on shared liberal democratic values; our deeply cherished values.

Given the long history of ideological divergence, it is not helpful, perhaps dangerous, to believe that the East-West tension, distrust, and confrontation can disappear overnight. A hard lesson of the period of detente in the 1970's was that a false expectation that all can suddenly be sweetness and light between East and West will, when inevitably disappointed, lead to an even greater level of distrust and confrontation than before.

But perhaps even more dangerous than such unrealistic expectations, is a cynicism set in concrete and steel, a cynicism that says that nothing ever really changes, that what has been and what is will always be. Such cynicism is ultimately a counsel of impotence and despair, a statement of disbelief in humanity's ability to make choices, and to strike out on new paths.

When we look at what has happened in the world over the last 70 years, we can see that change is not only possible, but is indeed the natural condition of mankind. While the force of nationalism has remained strong we have seen the emerging strength of multilateralism. Multilateralism itself is also changing, moving from an emphasis on security and political affairs to a recognition that there are many matters with which no one national state can deal alone. Such matters include economic affairs, poverty, human rights, racism, health, the environment and energy.

So change can happen, fundamental change. The words that are used to describe that process of change are extremely important. For example, General Secretary Gorbachev's exposition of the theoretical basis of the Soviet approach to the world is extremely important, because his "new way of thinking" stresses the interdependence of nations and their essential mutuality of interest in survival rather than international class conflict.

Important as are the words, however, even more important are the deeds.

In the vital area of nuclear arms control and disarmament, we have seen important deeds in the last 18 months. We are about to see the conclusion of an INF Agreement, the first arms control agreement that will lead to an actual reduction in the number of nuclear weapons. Beyond its significance for Europe the agreement has a positive impact on security in the Asia-Pacific region. On behalf of my Government and the people of Australia I congratulate the Soviet Union and the United States on this historic achievement.

We believe you share the view, however, that it should be only a beginning. We need to see achievements of similar magnitude in the much more threatening area of strategic arsenals, in chemical weapons, in conventional arms, in nuclear testing. Many of these areas are extremely complex and involve important national security interests. But we are heartened by the seriousness of negotiations which are in train and the evident fact that East and West have come to share a commitment to achieving genuine progress in arms control.

I do not think, and I believe none of us thinks, that an end to East-West competition is in sight. The focus of attention must therefore be to manage competition, above all to ensure it remains peaceful.

On regional problems, we are encouraged by your new readiness to engage in dialogue. But there is a long way to go.

In particular the resolution of the situation in Afghanistan, encompassing the earliest possible withdrawal of Soviet troops and the implementation of the right of the Afghan people to choose their own form of Government, would give hope to those who see real possibilities of a new kind of relationship between East and West.

The tragic situation in Kampuchea is of particular concern to Australia. The continued Vietnamese military presence there and the continued denial of the right to national sovereignty of the Kampuchean people represent the single major source of uncertainty in the South East Asian region. We have noted the wish expressed by the Soviet Union to play a more active and constructive role in the Asia-Pacific region.

We think however, that the prospects for such a role by the Soviet Union will be greatly enhanced if you are able to contribute in a concrete way to resolving the Kampuchean situation. A genuinely constructive role in the region must comprise more than concepts and intentions.

Australia of course has a particular interest in the South Pacific region. That region has of late begun to go through a period of dynamic change. There have been areas of difficulty. We would hope and expect the Soviet Union, in pursuing its rights to have normal diplomatic and commercial relations with the countries of the South Pacific, to keep very much in mind the need not to superimpose an East/West dimension on the problems of the region. In this regard we place particular importance on the assurances given by Foreign Minister Shevardnadze during his visit to Australia earlier this year.

As part of its new approach to foreign relations the Soviet Union has expressed greater interest in involvement in the global economy. We see this as a welcome development. No country can insulate itself from developments in the world economy. We will all ultimately be served by a trading system which encourages growth. We will all ultimately suffer from protectionism which can only result in economic stagnation. This is true for socialist countries, as for others.

I am glad that we have recently developed with the Soviet Union a much more constructive and genuine dialogue on matters of human rights and human contacts between people. We welcome the concrete measures that the Soviet Union has taken in these areas, particularly in cases involving Australia. As we have said many times these issues of human rights transcend national boundaries and are in many ways the touchstone of whether a new era of East/West relations will be realised. We do not intend our discussions with you on this issues to be antagonistic, but you will know that they are and will continue to be an essential element in our relationship.

Australia wants to have a relationship with the Soviet Union which is fruitful across the whole range of areas where there is a mutual interest. It is therefore pleasing that our relationship has developed substantially in the last several years. We want very much to strengthen our economic and commercial ties and we will be signing during the course of this visit a new program for the development of trade and economic cooperation. We hope this will lead to an expansion of economic exchanges between us on a firm long-term footing and I stress that we want this to be an expansion of trade in both directions.

We welcome the moves the Soviet Government is making in the management of your economy, including the openings for joint ventures and other forms of cooperation - they are of great interest to us. It is a reflection of our interest in economic relations with you that many of Australia's leading business people have joined me in Moscow and I want them and their Soviet counterparts to take mutual advantage of these developments.

We are also concluding agreements on medical research, space science, and sport, which illustrate our interests in regular and substantive contact.

Mr Prime Minister, fundamental to all these areas, whether it be developing bilateral relations, addressing regional problems, promoting human rights or advancing the cause of arms control is better communication between Governments, between social systems, between individuals.

I speak to you tonight on the eve of a summit meeting between General Secretary Gorbachev and President Reagan. This is international communication of the highest importance not just for the two superpowers but for all nations. In this sense, while we are not present in the room, we are all participants in the process.

One Summit will not solve everything but it is part of a process, the ultimate stakes of which are the survival of mankind. At the highest level both the Soviet Union and the United States have recognised as the ultimate goal a world without nuclear weapons.

During the last 40 years we have slowly and steadily built for ourselves a nuclear scaffold. If humanity should ever stand on that scaffold - whether through crisis, miscalculation or accident - and if it should turn to look its executioner in the face, it will see itself.

We must never let this happen. We must seek to dismantle the nuclear scaffold and we must do so without destroying our own security in the process.

For our part Australia will continue to play a full and active role in encouraging arms control measures which enhance security and encourage progress towards the objective of nuclear disarmament.

Mr Prime Minister, this is the fifth time I have visited the Soviet Union. "From my preparations for the visit and from the discussions which we had today I have sensed a renewal of purpose and openness to dialogue. This not only gives my visit special interest at this time but gives me cause for hope that old barriers will give way to new opportunities for closer communication and co-operation between us.

I wish to thank you and your colleagues for your most generous welcome and for the opportunity my visit provides for open and beneficial discussion of the many subjects of interest and of concern to our two countries.
