



PRIME MINISTER

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW WITH LIZ HAYES, TODAY PROGRAM,
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HAYES: It seems, I don't wish to be cynical, but maybe these exercises have a touch of the Andrew Peacocks - the war you have when you're not having a war. Do we really need it?

PM: Do we need the exercise?

HAYES: Yes.

PM: Well, the army and the Government wouldn't be engaged in an exercise like this which involves so much money unless it was regarded as necessary. We can't assume that we're always going to live in a benign atmosphere and if we're going to have the troops, the airforce, our naval people in a state where they can discharge their ultimate responsibility to this country, its defence, then they have to have the opportunity of training in circumstances which will best equip them to do that and that's precisely what this is about.

HAYES: Well, I understand that we can't assume a great deal, but we do seem to be assuming just who the enemy might be and we're suggesting that the enemy will only come through the Top End. I mean, are you prepared to pinpoint who we're going to be concerned about?

PM: No. I'm not saying who we're going to be concerned about, but I don't think there's very much chance of an attack from the Antarctic, particularly after we make it an international wilderness park and as a matter of logic it must come from the northern area. That's part of the effect I'm sorry.

HAYES: I understand.

PM: I'm sorry Liz, just wait a minute, I can't hear you while that's going over. Better now. Obviously if there is going to be any danger for Australia it must come from our northern approaches.

HAYES: One of the things we do seem to be doing is showing any potential enemy what we are about. We have observers from other countries here looking at exactly how we're going about defending ourselves if the event should ever occur.

PM: Yes, well it's an eminently sensible thing to do isn't it? Do you think that we spend all this money on defence, we have these extremely capable officers and ranks, do you think we have all those things, that they'd make a mistake of having someone here that they think is going to be adverse to our best interests?

HAYES: No -

PM: In television we make the assumption that you act in terms of what you regard as your best interests. You ought to make the same assumption about the defence forces.

HAYES: Well moving on to the frigate contract, if I can, and what is our position now that the frigate contract doesn't necessarily seem as though it's going to go ahead with New Zealand?

PM: We don't know what the New Zealand position will be. We are still hoping that they will accept the responsibility which is involved, in our judgement, in being part of that deal. We've been proceeding on that basis. The fact that there's been a change of Prime Minister doesn't, in my judgement, necessarily mean that the chances of them accepting the deal have been diminished. I believe that Mr Palmer thinks that it is appropriate that New Zealand should be part of the deal and I hope that will be the decision because, as I pointed out to his predecessor and as I pointed out to him yesterday in a brief conversation I had when he rang me, that it would have unhelpful effects upon the Australia/New Zealand relationship if that were not to be the case.

HAYES: But there is debate continuing and if New Zealand should decide not to go ahead, do we still go ahead?

PM: Of course we go ahead, there's never been any question of that.

HAYES: We can afford to go ahead?

PM: How many times do I have to say it, Liz, we're going ahead. ... it's a decision that has to be made and it will be made. It's just much better, not merely in economic terms, but it's much better in terms of the relationship and co-operative relationship between our two countries that they should be part of it. They can't have a position, and let's be quite frank about it, they can't have a position where they want to be part of a co-operative defence relationship between Australia and New Zealand but

essentially do it on the cheap. If they're going to be part of a co-operative defence relationship which we've sought to enhance in the circumstances of their withdrawal from ANZUS, then there are benefits for that in it and there are also obligations in our judgement.

HAYES: If I could change subjects just slightly and that is to the rebel rugby union team which may be going off to South Africa and it would appear as though some Australians may participate in that, I mean, can you understand that players may still wonder why they're being asked not to play when Governments still do trade with South Africa?

PM: The Government doesn't do trade with South Africa. We have imposed very considerable sanctions on South Africa and we're doing all that we can, not only in regard to Australia but to other countries to bring about that position. I'm not trying to condemn an individual simply because he thinks that he wants to do something that will gratify himself, I'm simply saying that like individuals, ... have to do certain things which have a broader perspective than just a perception of their immediate self interests. What is happening is that, as far as the rest of the world is concerned and as far as South Africa is concerned, coming an increasing realisation that they can't continue the abhorrent regime which denies the equality of human beings in terms of opportunity, that that must come to an end and that these people are not being asked just to advance the interests of sports, that they're being asked by South Africa to help to advance their own image and increase their own acceptability. I ask individuals to understand that, in a sense, they have responsibilities beyond themselves and I hope they will do that.

HAYES: Well, we'll leave you on that note, Mr Hawke. We do thank you for joining us and we hope you enjoy Exercise Kangaroo.

PM: It's been a pleasure. May I take this opportunity of saying how all Australians ought to be tremendously proud of their armed services. I've had the opportunity of seeing here not only their efficiency, but their commitment and their pride and I hope that's something that's shared by all Australians.

HAYES: I can say, Mr Hawke, we've also noticed this at first hand ourselves. Thank you very much.

PM: Thank you very much indeed.

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