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## PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

3 JULY 1990

It is a long established and important principle in our system of Government that public servants, particularly those at senior levels directly advising on policy or directly administering Government policy, should refrain from public criticism of Government policy.

In the light of the comments attributed to Dr David Charles, former Secretary of the Department of Industry, Technology and Commerce, in yesterday's *Australian Financial Review*, I have now considered a report from the Secretary of my Department.

I have also been able to examine the transcript of the interview given on the record by Dr Charles, and have had a discussion directly with him.

It is clear from that consideration, and from my discussion with Dr Charles, that major elements of the interview given by Dr Charles were accurately reported by the *Australian Financial Review*.

It is also clear that this interview represents a fundamental breach of the principle referred to earlier.

Dr Charles himself accepts that this was a fundamental breach and deeply regrets it.

In normal circumstances, this would warrant disciplinary action well beyond the reprimand already given - and I have accordingly seriously considered revoking his appointment as Consul-General in Berlin.

I am conscious of the extremely able and dedicated service previously given to this Government and earlier Governments by Dr Charles without blemish.

There are private circumstances, however, which I find compelling and which have led me to decide to take no further action beyond the reprimand given.