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## PRIME MINISTER

TRANSCRIPT OF NEWS CONFERENCE, LE LAGON HOTEL, VANUATU  
29 JULY 1990

E & OE - PROOF ONLY

JOURNALIST: Mr Hawke, have the Pacific leaders got any need to worry about Johnston Atoll?

PM: I think they should obviously have a concern about it and those concerns ought to be addressed, as I think they will be, in discussion at the Forum. I have had a number of our scientific experts look at this issue and I'll be sharing those opinions with my colleagues.

JOURNALIST: ... topic dominate the discussions today -

PM: No, it certainly didn't dominate the discussion. By no means.

JOURNALIST: But how worried were the leaders ...?

PM: They expressed their concerns. They were perfectly entitled. They should raise questions. I hope that in some way we'll be able to allay some of those concerns out of the scientific opinions that have been provided to me. But as I say, I don't want to go into those in detail until I've discussed them under the appropriate heading in the meeting with my colleagues.

JOURNALIST: How confident are you there will be a compromise on the Johnston Atoll issue?

PM: What do you mean a compromise? Do you think we're going to launch an attack on the Americans?

JOURNALIST: Do you see Australia as being a go-between between America and the FICs?

PM: No, I don't see that as the role of Australia to be a go-between. I think the role of Australia is to provide our colleagues with the information that we've got. Obviously Australia has a scientific capacity that is not available to our friends. I'm going to place that material fully before them and share with them the material that I have.

JOURNALIST: So you're going to distribute the report?

PM: Well just how I will do it will be a matter for me. I'll certainly either read it all out to them or give them

the copies of it to see. In the meeting I will certainly fully share it with them.

JOURNALIST: What are the other issues likely to come up?

PM: Well environmental issues are obviously important. Generally I think they'll want to talk about the New Zealand initiative. Our friends from New Zealand are wanting to put some additional money into SPREP, the South Pacific Regional Environmental Program. We'll be able to report on the progress that we are making with the initiative I undertook two years ago to provide monitoring stations in the region to look at what is happening to sea levels, which is an important topic for our friends in this region. So environmental matters will be important. And I would think also there'll be some discussion about New Caledonia - not I think a dominating discussion but we want to make sure that in the United Nations again this year that we can get a common position on that. That'll be a matter for some discussion.

JOURNALIST: ... of New Caledonia you've got some, well, a meeting that you're probably not going to look forward to with Michael Mansell who's here claiming -

PM: What meeting am I having with Michael Mansell? You've got news I haven't got mate.

JOURNALIST: He's here and he wants to -

PM: Well he won't be seeing me I can tell you that.

JOURNALIST: He's seeking recognition that -

PM: Look, don't let's get excited about Mr Mansell. You know what he represents and that's zilch.

JOURNALIST: Does he have the potential to embarrass you here though?

PM: Do I look embarrassed comrade?

JOURNALIST: He wants to be recognised by the Forum as a member government representative ...?

PM: Look, it is Sunday and I think you shouldn't joke too much on the Sabbath. It's not proper.

JOURNALIST: Has he got any right at all to -

PM: He's got a right to be here. But he's got no right to claim to represent anyone - other than Michael Mansell.

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister, when you see Nauru will you be asking them to reconsider their bid for international court action, sort of justice action, compensation for the mining ...?

PM: It's up to Nauru as to whether they want to pursue their action in an International Court of Justice. I think, as is so often the case in these matters, the only people who will prosper out of that are the lawyers. They never miss out.

JOURNALIST: You don't see Australia as being, should hand over any money at all in that matter?

PM: ... if they want to proceed with that matter in the International Court of Justice we will fight that vigorously. But that won't affect our determination to try and assist that country because their phosphate supplies will run out in four to five years, seems to be the estimate. I believe we've got some obligation within our general approach of assistance in the South Pacific region to try and help them to deal with those problems. But that's a matter entirely independent of their action in the ICJ.

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