



PRIME MINISTER

TRANSCRIPT OF NEWS CONFERENCE, REVESBY WORKERS CLUB,
SYDNEY - 19 AUGUST 1990

E & OE - PROOF ONLY

JOURNALIST: How concerned are you that shots have been fired?

PM: Very concerned. I continue to express the hope that good sense will prevail on the part of the Iraqi leadership because, as I've said consistently, all sensible analysis should lead the Iraqi leadership to concede that the best interests of their own people involves their withdrawal from Kuwait. I repeat what I have consistently said - if they believe they have some legitimate grievances with their neighbour, then there exist mechanisms, peaceful mechanisms whereby these issues can be considered and decisions made.

JOURNALIST: Any Australian hostages, as you know, in military installations?

PM: Well we don't know about disposition but we do know now that the Iraqi authorities have indicated to our representatives that the same arrangements apply to Australians as they've now sought to impose upon the Americans and the British. We have some, as far as we can ascertain in broad terms, about 80 Australians in Kuwait and about 70 in Iraq. All I can say is that our diplomatic authorities have been consistently and persistently putting to the Iraqi authorities our grave concern, our repudiation of this action that they're attempting to take.

JOURNALIST: What about the Budget? How much pressure is the crisis putting on plans for that?

PM: Well I wouldn't say enormous pressure, but obviously it does involve some recalculations. But as I've said earlier today, it's difficult to put firm figures on it because one has to make a whole series of assumptions about how long the crisis would last. Particularly also you've got to make assumptions about what will be done in regard to trying to fill the four million barrels per day shortfall that's involved in the loss of Iraqi and Kuwaiti supplies. That is capable of being made up and we just can't be sure about what will happen in this respect.

JOURNALIST: Are you prepared to do any deals to free any Australian hostages?

PM: You can't do deals, but I hope that as distinct from deals, that the pressure of world opinion - which I think is virtually unanimous outside Iraq on this - will bring good sense to bear. What did you say about Mr Griffiths?

JOURNALIST: He says that there's going to be a backlash from Caucus about the speed at which you decided to send troops to the Gulf and the manner which -

PM: (inaudible)

JOURNALIST: The Resources Minister.

PM: Did he?

JOURNALIST: Do you agree that you're going to have some sort of trouble with the Caucus about the way the decision was arrived at?

PM: No I wouldn't believe so. We had a unanimous position in Cabinet about it and I don't believe there are any problems.

JOURNALIST: Dr Hewson's asked today for you to make a Parliamentary statement next week about -

PM: I don't need the Leader of the Opposition to tell me how to conduct my affairs. There'll be a statement to Parliament, and our intention was to do that anyway. We don't need Dr Hewson to tell us how to run our affairs. He's got enough problems in his own Opposition. Let him concentrate on that.

JOURNALIST: Will you consult full Cabinet for any future decisions?

PM: It's already been announced.

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