



3

## PRIME MINISTER

TRANSCRIPT OF JOINT NEWS CONFERENCE WITH RABBIE NAMALIU,  
PRIME MINISTER OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA, TRAVELODGE HOTEL,  
PORT MORESBY - 3 SEPTEMBER 1990

E & OE - PROOF ONLY

PM: Ok. Would you like to just start with the questions? Would you like any initial statement or just questions?

JOURNALIST: Mr Hawke, what did you mean in your speech today when you referred to the time is long past that Australian forces could act in an internal security role? You then qualified this by saying -

PM: Yes, I used three adjectives - exceptional, agreed and limited I think.

JOURNALIST: (inaudible)

PM: Yes. Taking the first part of it Milton, in pre-independence days of course Australian forces were used and I think there was some perception in the post-independence period that that sort of thing could happen. What I wanted to make clear within that context of the general points I'd been making before that, was that people must absolutely understand the reality that when you're talking about the relations between Papua New Guinea and Australia you're talking about the relations between two sovereign and independent nations. Therefore when you're talking between two sovereign independent nations it is not normal to assume that the forces of one will go in and be involved in the internal security matters of the other. I wanted to make that absolutely clear. Now it is the case that, for instance the Prime Minister and I have talked about contingent situations where Australia's interests - let's be precise, in Bougainville - it was conceivable there that if things had developed in a way which was, y'know, very bad and that Australian lives could have been threatened or questions of hostages involved, that, and given the numbers of Australians there and also New Zealanders for instance ... talked to us about this, it was conceivable that we might have wanted to say to the Papua New Guinea Government, well there are circumstances there which, would you consider it appropriate that we should be involved for the very limited and agreed purposes of protecting the interests of a large number of Australians. Let me be quite specific about it in that context. But the important point Milton was that because

it is a relationship between two sovereign independent nations there was never any thought in my mind that I could just send Australian troops in there. It was something that I properly had to talk with the Prime Minister about and get a degree of understanding. That was the sort of thing I had in mind.

JOURNALIST: Mr Hawke, you also said in your speech that you felt it was no longer appropriate for people to be suggesting that Australia should transfer large numbers of public servants ... and military advisors to help you and you say it's just not on? To whom in Papua New Guinea are you addressing those remarks?

PM: It was not just to Papua New Guinea. You see, one of the things that's worried me about discussions about the relations between Papua New Guinea and Australia is not just within some areas of Papua New Guinea, and certainly in some areas of Australia, but when I find people in the region and some of our larger international friends, they're talking about this region as though independence hasn't taken place. I mean there is an unstated assumption in a lot of these areas that we still have some sort of almost colonial relationship. So in every respect it's important to be saying I wasn't talking just ... Papua New Guinea. I mean that address was directed to a broad audience as well.

JOURNALIST: General Benny Murdani was allegedly saying to Dr Hewson that Australia might have to play a role in Papua New Guinea. Is that the sort of person you're talking about?

PM: No. Let me say that in regard to those people, those two participants in that dialogue, it was a dialogue of the knowledgable and the unknowledgable. General Murdani does know a good deal about the situation on the broader and in particular in relations of the two countries in general. The Leader of the Opposition has an amazing learning curve when it comes to matters regional and international. As far as Indonesia is concerned, let me say this, that I believe that the relations between Indonesia and Papua New Guinea are mature and intelligent with a shared understanding of the proprieties between them ... the relationship. And indeed Rabbin we've been talking about this issue. I'm very pleased to see that both the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister have asserted the nature of that relationship as being on a very sound basis. I don't believe that either the President of Indonesia or Mr Alatas who I think is an outstanding Foreign Minister, or General Murdani are under any illusions as to the sovereign independence of Papua New Guinea and within that framework of the propriety of the relationships between Australia and Papua New Guinea. Certainly in the discussions that we've had with the Indonesians we've had no reason to believe that.

JOURNALIST: Mr Namaliu, I wonder if there is any contingency where you would ask Australia to send troops to assist in Bougainville?

NAMALIU: The question is obviously hypothetical in the sense that you don't actually consider those sorts of options until a situation arises. But in the particular case that's been referred to here by the Prime Minister in respect of Australian citizens, say in the case of Bougainville, being placed in a difficult position because of safety of lives, there would have to be in that case a contingency plan to ensure that they were flown or taken out of the island safely and that no lives were put in jeopardy. That is one situation where you could foresee this type of circumstance arising.

JOURNALIST: Mr Namaliu, what's the latest state of play as far as the delivery of goods and services to Bougainville?

NAMALIU: The state of play as of now is that the ships are still there with the supplies on board, with our men on board. Discussions are still taking place between the BRA leaders and the community leaders as to the question of distribution. ... question that is still being resolved because obviously there is a difference of view as to who should be doing the distribution of services on the island. And in this case the BRA have obviously indicated that they would like to co-ordinate all of the distribution of the goods and services that are being delivered. On the other hand community leaders feel that it should be the public servants that should be doing it.

JOURNALIST: How much pressure has this difference of view put the Endeavour Accord under?

NAMALIU: I think that if this had put pressure on the Endeavour Accord to the extent to whether there was any likelihood of it breaking down it would have happened by now. The fact that there's been, that, so far, the Accord is being observed by and large in the sense that there's been no force used, no arms carried, our men have been asked to remain there rather than go, there has been communication between our people and the BRA leaders. The fact that our people are indicating that they should go because ... is running low, ... ask to stay as well as the fact that they were being asked to tend to urgently sick people, all indicates that the good will is there, that the desire is there to make sure that the Endeavour Accord is implemented but implemented in such a way that the community leaders and the BRA leaders themselves are agreed on a common position. So I don't think it is at risk.

JOURNALIST: They're all off Buka Island?

NAMALIU: They're all there now.

JOURNALIST: Are they actually attending to urgently sick people?

NAMALIU: That's the request that's coming through now. So within the next few hours we should know whether that would be possible.

JOURNALIST: So the ships have come along side have they?

NAMALIU: Yes.

JOURNALIST: Prime Ministers, both of you in your speeches today referred to law and order concerns. There seemed to be some suggestion that if a request for additional assistance for policing ... be made or the offer would be made. Is there any funds planned for that or any request in mind?

NAMALIU: We have a program, as you may be aware, under AIDAB. That's being funded by the Australian Government, specifically geared to assisting the police ... building and ensuring that at a number of levels, including management, that we have assistance provided in a way that it improves the level of performance of our police force. More recently we have indicated that we may be requiring some additional help in terms of advisors to join those that are already here.

PM: I've indicated a positive attitude towards any such request that may come.

JOURNALIST: To what extent would this extra help go? I mean how many advisors?

NAMALIU: Twenty.

PM: Twenty.

JOURNALIST: And what's the cost?

PM: It's capable of being accommodated within the existing programs that we have. Let me say that even if it were not - and I'm assured that it is - but even if it were not I'd be prepared to meet the request.

JOURNALIST: Are there any special areas that these twenty advisors will be covering, like crowd control?

NAMALIU: They would be placed in positions at the provincial levels because at the moment most of those that are already here are based in Port Moresby. What we would like is to have more of these advisors out in the provinces assisting at the provincial level. Assisting provincial commanders, regional commanders. As part of our new initiative to set up regional commands in the country we would also like to build out capacity at that level in addition to the capacity that's being developed at the provincial level.

PM: Let me make the point that that is precisely consistent with what I was expressing in my speech, that's it's not an idea of us coming in and solving the problems, it's a question of assisting Papua New Guinea to build up their own capacity to deal with these issues.

JOURNALIST: Mr Namaliu, in your speech you spoke of the tremendous difficulties that will challenge the very basis of our democratic institutions, which sounds a fairly dire sort of a worry. Could you elaborate on exactly what you fear.

NAMALIU: What I think I fear is, as I'm sure you will understand, is that once you have a total breakdown of law and order, then the very fabric of democratic institutions in this country would be at risk. Therefore it is in our interests and international interests that we maintain those institutions that are responsible for ensuring that order exists in this country. And it is in that context that I was making those comments.

JOURNALIST: Mr Namaliu, Mr Hawke has indicated twice how he ... Australia is willing to assist with the ... of Bougainville. Have you given, has your Government given any practical consideration to that offer?

NAMALIU: Not in a sense of there being specific requests. But obviously in the overall scheme of things in respect of the rehabilitation program further down the line, as we begin this process of delivery services and goods to the province, there will emerge from time to time additional needs that we may not be in a position to do ourselves, in which case we may be looking for additional help.

JOURNALIST: Mr Namaliu, will your Government be rescinding a recent Private Members Bill regarding mineral mining, giving landowners rights down to twenty metres below the surface?

NAMALIU: That particular bill is not yet ... in which case it is not yet in effect. However, the intention of the Government is essentially this, that we have been now relation to mining. In that whole range of legislation in planning and proposing to introduce a series of amendments anyhow, changes to the mining legislation which will in this case include an amendment or change to that particular bill to ensure that existing agreements are honoured. And also that in relation to alluvial mining, which is something that we are generally agreed on, that it is defined in such a way that it is in fact referring to alluvial mining and that no ... and no prospecting or ... or no existing agreement is affected in such a way that by the application of that principle it also creates problems for ... mining which is the particular case in the case of Mount ...

JOURNALIST: So this would remove the threat to CRA?

NAMALIU: That's right.

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister Namaliu, what sort of timeframe are you looking at, what is your latest assessment on resolving the crisis on Bougainville?

NAMALIU: If I had - we of course have been hoping that by now we would have resolved the problem. Twelve months ago I was asked the same question. I said I was optimistic that we would within the timeframe that has now brought to us ... today. Obviously that has not happened but it hasn't diminished our resolve to ensure that we resolve it firstly peacefully, because we believe very strongly that that's the only way to achieve a lasting solution to this situation. But we have the experience that it takes time. And it will take time. There will not be any magic, fast solution to this situation.

JOURNALIST: In taking this time, is it in your view entrenching the BRA?

NAMALIU: It depends on how you look at it. Because if for instance you look at the situation as it has existed now since March - the level of services in the provinces has collapsed totally - in which case those that were in some position of decision-making over there would not have been in a position to satisfy the vast majority of the people in the province with increasing pressures for access to services which cannot be provided under the present circumstances. So in that sense it is difficult to entrench your position if you don't have the goods to deliver to the people. Eventually the people themselves would get frustrated and will start applying, as they are in fact doing, pressures on you to either resume the services or something else might develop.

JOURNALIST: Mr Namaliu, how many people have died as a result of not having medical supplies and ... to treat ... diseases and so on?

NAMALIU: I think that those that have died are all mainly women in the process of childbirth.

JOURNALIST: Numbers?

NAMALIU: No, we don't have any specific numbers. It's obviously difficult to get correct numbers, or has been over the last few months.

JOURNALIST: The Australian ..., when they left the country some time ago, a month or so ago, used the figure of fourteen people having died.

NAMALIU: No, we don't have any way of confirming that figure. So at this point I couldn't be any more accurate than what I'm saying now.

JOURNALIST: Is that a tolerable situation Prime Minister?

NAMALIU: No situation is tolerable where lives are lost of course. In this situation unfortunately that has happened. We wanted to avoid it. We want to avoid it. Which is why we're anxious to get services restored to the island as soon as practicable.

JOURNALIST: Are you insisting that security forces be on the island to distribute those services? Is that your final position on that?

NAMALIU: No, they're all basically ... to help with restoration of services ... roads, health services getting repaired and put back into a situation where they can take in nurses and patients and so on. ... more than any other option. The distribution will be done by public servants who are there. That would be ...

JOURNALIST: Mr Hawke, I asked for an opening statement. Can you tell me how you felt discussions went today with the PNG Government and what particular issues dominated ...?

PM: Yes. Well firstly they - well let me go back. It's usual when you visit another country and have discussions with Heads of Government and Ministers to say that the talks have been frank, direct and constructive. That's a standard line of patter that's used I suppose. But I simply want to say to you that on this occasion when I say to you, as I will, that ... have been direct, frank, constructive, that's not a line of patter because that's an accurate use of language to describe what's happened in the relatively brief period we've been here. I've had firstly a session with the Prime Minister and a smaller group of Ministers. That was before lunch. And then after lunch with an expanded group of Ministers. We wasted no time. We covered the bilateral relationship in terms of - and this is not in order of importance - but covering the things that we dealt with: aid; the economic development of Papua New Guinea; the issues of Bougainville; the related issues of resource development - what had been the impact of Bougainville upon those; the satisfaction or otherwise of the Government here with the arrangements they have in place in other areas of development in terms of the relationship of the central government, the landowners and provincial government in terms of share of benefits. There was a lot of discussion about our defence co-operation programs in regard to the challenges confronting Papua New Guinea in the area of internal security and law and order. There was discussion about trade between our two countries. And without being exhaustive, they covered the sorts of

things that we really spent most of our time upon. There was also a discussion about constitutional reform and the relationship between the central government and provincial government. We also affirmed the commonality of our position on the need in this emergence of new generations of leadership in Papua New Guinea, and in Australia, to ensure that the framework that we have should be developed in a way that meant that these new generations of leadership would take the relationship as seriously as those in the first fifteen years of independence have done. We talked about the significance for the development of Papua New Guinea, of its position in the Asia Pacific region. The whole of those discussions, if I may say, were premised upon points that I made in my speech, and that is that we assert the foundational importance of recognising the sovereign independence of Papua New Guinea. We're not here to make decisions for them. That is objectionable in concept, impractical in fact. And that what the whole thrust of Australia's position is to try and ensure that the aid that we give, which more and more is going to be balanced towards project and program aid rather than budget aid, should be directed into those areas which are going to best equip Papua New Guinea to be able to meet the most obvious challenges of economic development and law and order. That was the structure, the framework and the content of the talks.

JOURNALIST: On the question of aid, Mr Namaliu in his speech projected the running down ... of budget aid by the end of the century. I take it that you'd be happy with that sort of projection, but have you any idea of what level of, how the program aid is likely to rise reciprocally over that period?

PM: No we can't be precise about it. What's been understood from the time when we really went to the Development Cooperation Program was that, and that was finalised in 89. It has been based on a clear understanding on both sides that it is politically and economically appropriate that we should move to the position where in budget terms the Government of Papua New Guinea is financially independent. You've got to recognise that at the present time the aid of over \$300 million is a very significant proportion of their budget position and the GDP is to the order of six per cent. And we recognise that that has got to come down and down. But it will mean that you can't sensibly, at this stage, put a figure upon either the aggregate or the breakup within project and program assistance that will be appropriate at that time. I mean it's too uncertain. The important thing for Papua New Guinea to know is the continuing commitment we have to be of relevance to them and assistance to them in terms of the particular challenge and problems that confront them. No-one tries to say at this time that you can put figures upon that. At all points however there will be one common thread about our assistance. It will always be directed towards



trying to ensure that the capacity and the instruments of Papua New Guinea for dealing with its problems are going to be enhanced. That's the continuing criterion that will be employed.

JOURNALIST: In the course of the talks Mr Hawke on Bougainville, were you able to provide any advice or assistance at all on the stand-off between the BRA and the PNG forces?

PM: I neither proffered any nor was I asked. That was as it should be, I repeat, in a position of the relations between two sovereign independent nations. The resolution of the Bougainville issue is a matter for the Government of Papua New Guinea.

JOURNALIST: Mr Hawke if the situation did deteriorate and Australian help was requested, would the strategy be limited simply to trying to get Australians out ... help to restore order?

PM: No I must say that the very very firm prima facie position would be the former. That we would see our responsibility on the basis of agreement with the Government of Papua New Guinea would be, in that hypothetical situation, the provision of our resources to ensure the safe withdrawal of, not only Australian citizens, but it would be possible in that situation if you're talking about perhaps New Zealanders. That would be the strong prima facie position. I can't rule out absolutely that there wouldn't be in some situation either a request and a consideration of some other function. But prima facie I would be against it and we should limit ourselves to the role of, on an agreed basis, protecting Australian citizens.

JOURNALIST: Mr Namaliu, has Indonesia expressed its concern about the secessionist movement in Bougainville ...

NAMALIU: No.

JOURNALIST: Prime Minister Hawke in your speech you said Australia hasn't got the capacity I understand ... position you've taken philosophically. What does this capacity mean?

PM: The capacity was related to politics - not intrinsic, I mean I didn't mean to convey -

JOURNALIST: It's not military force for example, not military capacity?

PM: No. It's the political, it goes to political reality. Nothing that - and we are talking so hypothetically. Get back to the facts, we are talking of relations between two sovereign independent nations. In that context if Australia were to say we'll come in and

fix up your law and order problems, the political realities are that you couldn't do it. They wouldn't accept it. Nor should they. It would be repudiated and so it should. I mean that's the sense in which we haven't got the capacity. I am not saying that we technically don't know what issues are relevant, but it's only in that sense that if our advice and assistance is sought we'll give it but we can't do it.

JOURNALIST: Mr Hawke this constant message you've been delivering today that it's Papua New Guinea's responsibility to sort out its problems ...

PM: I've been delivering two messages so don't say it is just one ... It's two. That it is the responsibility of Papua New Guinea to deal with its problems. It will be the intention of Australia as a close neighbour and good friend to assist them to be in a position to do those things.

JOURNALIST: I think you are on the right track.

PM: Thank you very much. Thank you. That reassures me.

JOURNALIST: What I was going to ask though, sir, was is ~~this message as much welcomed by the people in~~ in Australia as it is to people up here?

PM: In a sense yes. I go back to the point there is often, amongst some Australian commentators and some in the region and some in the world, the unstated assumption that there is still some quasi colonial relationship. Well let everyone understand that that finished in 1975.

JOURNALIST: Mr Namaliu do you have to still wean your people off the idea well we can turn to Australia in times of need?

NAMALIU: I think, you know, that the people of this country know that we cannot go on depending on Australia forever or indefinitely. On the other hand they know that Australia is a friend, Australia is right next door, we have a long historic relationship and the Australian people generally I feel are well regarded up here. And in that regard wherever there is a need that we cannot fulfill from within and need some help with Australia obviously comes to the forefront of the countries that we go to.

JOURNALIST: Mr Namaliu, Mr Hawke is going to Mt Hagen tomorrow. There has as I understand it been a considerable amount of tension there following the killing of the Engan businessman, ... What is the position at the moment and do you have any security concerns?

NAMALIU: The position is that you will be welcome in Mt Hagen by the Premier and the people of Western

Highlands. They are prepared for him and they are ready to welcome him there tomorrow. And then up to Porgera where the Premier of Enga, and the members from Enga for the Porgera area as well as the regional member for Enga, will be there to welcome the Prime Minister tomorrow. I don't think that the question of security will be a major concern so as to prevent the visit from going ahead. They are ready, they're prepared and they will be there to welcome the Prime Minister tomorrow.

JOURNALIST: Mr Hawke I presume the London convention applies -

PM: You're absolutely correct.

JOURNALIST: I wondered whether you'd break it for Iraq?

PM: Yes, that's not London.

JOURNALIST: The Iraqi Ambassador in Canberra today has ... stated that men would be kept as pawns until the end, until the threat to Iraq had disappeared ...?

PM: Well I deplore it. It is the case that, as I'm informed as of about 3.00 o'clock this afternoon, I am trying to keep in touch continuously with the situation. As I'm informed from the middle of the afternoon there are I believe two Australian males still in detention. The whereabouts of one is not known. This use of innocent foreign nationals in the Gulf crisis by the leadership of Iraq is horrendous, unacceptable and there will be, I repeat, no resolution. There can be no resolution of this crisis until really three things happen. I have been consistent in what I have said on this from the beginning and that is that there must be withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait. There must be a release of all foreign hostages. And there must be a cessation of the threat to the country of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. These things are non-negotiable facts. I repeat what I've said consistently that it is an unacceptable violation of international codes of behaviour between nations that innocent foreigners are used as hostages in this sense.

JOURNALIST: ... do you have any concerns that the Summit between the US and Russia ... unprecedented world front against Iraq will produce any more or is there fears of a split -

PM: I have no fears of a split. I think we've got to put that in the context that the Secretary General of the United Nations. Perez de Cuellar made a gallant attempt to mediate in this matter and it may have ended in a way in which the United Nations Secretary General has said involves no progress whatsoever. In that circumstance the meeting between Presidents Bush and Gorbachev is to be welcomed. I think the statement by President Bush was an accurate one when he was asked as to what he thought

had been the attitude of the Soviets in this crisis in his words, was superb, in describing their attitude and their actions. I think that was a proper use of language and I think within the framework of the developing constructive relationship between the superpowers I have no reason to believe that the Summit will involve anything other than a continuation of that constructive relationship. I can only express the hope that, as I have before, that Saddam Hussein will make a rational analysis of the facts. Any rational analysis of the facts must lead to the conclusion that there can only be devastation for the people of Iraq by a continuation of the present situation. And I mean by that a continuation of the economic sanctions can only bring economic and personal devastation to the people of Iraq. There is a question of how long that takes but it must end in devastation. And of course the other possibility that we all hope and pray would not occur is that some escalation of the conflict could only mean possible devastation. So I would just say to President Saddam Hussein that the rational analysis of the factual situation should lead him to the conclusion that he should withdraw his forces, he should release the hostages. I repeat what I have said and what other leaders have said that if he does that then he should understand these things would follow. (a) there would be an end to sanctions; (b) there would be a withdrawal of the multinational naval force; (c) there would be the draw-down of the desert shield forces; (d) there would be an effort by everyone to get Iraq back constructively into the international community of nations; and (e) importantly, that if Saddam Hussein believes that Iraq has genuine grievances with Kuwait, either territorial or in regard to disputed resources, then there are means available including the International Court of Justice where these issues can be decided. He ought to understand that that should be the route they go.

ends