



PRIME MINISTER

38/92

**STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER, THE HON P J KEATING MP
VISIT TO AUSTRALIA BY US PRESIDENTIAL REPRESENTATIVES**

I am pleased to announce that the United States Secretary of Defence, Richard B Cheney, and the Secretary of Education Lamar Alexander will visit Australia in May as guests of the Australian Government. They will be coming as President Bush's personal representatives to celebrate Australian-American Friendship Week and will participate in the Battle of the Coral Sea 50th anniversary commemorations.

As a mark of the importance of these celebrations I too will be participating in several of the key events including the entry of Royal Australian and US Navy ships into Sydney Harbour on 1 May and a special wreath-laying ceremony at sea off Townsville on 10 May.

The Battle of the Coral Sea was not only one of the most significant battles in the Pacific theatre but has become a symbol of Australia's enduring relationship with the United States. The visits by Secretaries Cheney and Alexander further serve to strengthen the bonds of friendship and alliance that were forged between our countries during those perilous years.

CANBERRA

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