



PRIME MINISTER

**TRANSCRIPT OF THE PRIME MINISTER, THE HON P.J. KEATING, MP
DEPARTURE DOORSTOP, RAAF BASE FAIRBAIRN,
SUNDAY 20 JUNE 1993**

E&OE PROOF COPY

- J:** Prime Minister, Tim Fischer says you are going to split the nation over Mabo. Is that a real threat?
- PM:** Look, a little bit of restraint on Mr Fischer's part would go a long way. That is, he is supposed to be a national leader not somebody rousing a National Party conference. Last Friday I wrote to the Premiers and the letter contains a number of gestures which encourages the development of a co-operative arrangement between the Commonwealth and the States. Some Premiers have seen that and others have not or have not wanted to, but that is the import of it and I am quite sure as Commonwealth officials speak to State officials while I'm away, when I return, I think, I will be able to open up a dialogue with some of the Premiers.
- J:** What is on the top of your agenda on this trip Mr Keating?
- PM:** For Korea and China, Korea is a large trading partner of Australia - basically economic issues. China is now attracting substantial investment from Australia, it is about the third or fourth largest economy in the world and it is growing rapidly. So, largely economic issues, trade issues, questions such as APEC and general foreign policy and political issues.
- J:** How important is trade between China and Australia?
- PM:** It is important now, but it will become more important. It is already growing quite rapidly and the Chinese economy is, as I say, about the third or fourth largest in the world and growing at 7 or 8 per cent a year. It is very important to Australia in trade terms and also in investment terms.

J: Will you be raising the issue of human rights with Premier Li Peng?

PM: I will take the opportunity of expressing Australia's views about such matters, we always have and I will be again.

J: Can human rights get in the way of trade issues though if there is a problem there?

PM: China is a major country and a major country has to be dealt with on a breadth of issues and that is what I will be doing.

J: You are not doing any sightseeing at all by looking at the itinerary ...

PM: Well, it is three days in each place and it is pretty full of official engagements. I hope to make the best of it, cover as much ground as I can in the time I have got available which is a week. But again, for two countries it is enough.

ends