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PRIME MINISTER

**TRANSCRIPT OF THE PRIME MINISTER, HON P.J. KEATING, MP
DEPARTURE FOR USA, UK, EIRE, FRANCE AND MONACO
RAAF FAIRBAIRN, 11 SEPTEMBER, 1993**

J: ...farewell message to the Greens?

PM: I think we can give a farewell message to the Senate and just say, look, everyone's had their sport at this stage, it's now time I think for the nation, the national interest, to get a look-in. And this particularly applies to the Liberal Party. I can only reiterate what Mr Blight said the other day: it's not for the Liberal Party to be opposing Budget Bills in the Senate.

Now, they've all made their point, they've all made their political point about the particular measures - that's the Liberal Party, the Democrats and the Greens - and I think it's now time for them to think about the nation and getting on with the business of government and behaving like the people, the responsible people, they're supposed to be.

J: What about a bit more compromise on your part, though?

PM: Well, there's been enough compromise. I mean, the Greens want us to lop a half a billion off defence, to scrap the submarine program, to lift the company tax rate, to put a surcharge on incomes: that's not compromise, that's an alternative Budget and it is basically vandalising things like defence policy and also our corporate shift into Asia, because the Greens are worried about exports - they say we are not supporting the domestic markets, for God's sake. I mean they must be the only group of people in the country that don't believe in exports. I mean, they seriously say to us, "we're worried about exports". So the thing is that it's time for them also to understand that they've got responsibilities and that the Government has a fair Budget and it deserves passage.

J: Are you worried about the financial markets' reaction to what the Greens ...?

PM: Well, these sort of things go on in every country of the world, I think. And the Budget's a fundamentally good Budget, in financial market terms - if anything, it's too responsible in financial market terms - and I've got every confidence that it will pass in the Senate.

J: ...message to Bill Kelty about where the IR reforms..?

PM: Well, that's a negotiating thing and that will take a while to work through.

J: But are you determined still that non-unionists will have access...?

PM: I'm not writing your Sunday column for you, Amanda (Buckley). You've all got to get off your tail and do your own work.

J: Are you disappointed that the meeting with the President has been delayed by a day..?

PM: No. I think, given what's happened in the Middle East, this is probably a good arrangement for the President and for me. It is such a momentous occasion and I think giving it the recognition the President is giving it is a good thing to be doing, in Middle East and world terms and, not only do I understand, I certainly agree that that's where the priorities should be. And we can discuss then, in the relative peace of the next day, things of interest to us.

Of course, on this visit, I think that where there is an unusual coincidence is that, normally when an Australian Prime Minister meets an American President, what is on the top of our agenda is not normally on the top of their agenda. But this time, that's not so, and I think that with APEC, Asia Pacific Economic Co-Operation - or, maybe, Asia Pacific Economic Community - that this is very much uppermost in the Americans' minds, as it is in ours.

So, I'm looking forward to President Clinton. I think he's a breath of fresh air in the world - I've thought that from the day he really turned on some form in the primaries - and I'm really looking forward to meeting him.

J: And what are you going to say to the Queen at Balmoral?

PM: Well, the Queen's always, I think, a very convivial host, and she'll obviously be treated by me with the respect and regard and admiration which I've always had for her.

J: Do you expect a sympathetic response to the call for Australia to become a republic?

PM: Well I'm not campaigning with the Queen, but she's entitled to know my views, and my party's views, and one would be less than frank to not tell her. But her staff-work is, I'm sure, tip top and she would have all of our published remarks already. So I don't think anyone in the Australian media should assume that the Queen is anything other than entirely aware of our views.

J: What odds Sydney for the Olympic Games?

PM: I think Sydney's in there with a chance, a very good chance. But in any ballot - and this is a ballot - in any ballot you never know till the end, and the numbers are so fine, and the interests so diverse, you can't (inaudible) until it's all over.

J: There seems to be a bit of a feeling of crisis in the newspapers this morning, that you're leaving the country during very perilous, turbulent times...

PM: Oh, I wouldn't regard the two Greens and putting us in peril or turbulence. No, no. As I say, the Senate's had its sport, all the players have had their little bit of sport. You noticed Mrs Kernot last week coming out saying, everybody's played ducks and drakes with this, it's now time to stop - that's after she'd played ducks and drakes. And now the Greens have played ducks and drakes. The Liberal Party have been playing it now for two weeks, as Mr Blight reminded them. And I think ducks and drakes time is over. They've got a couple of weeks to think about it before these Bills come into the Senate, but I've got every confidence that the Budget will pass the Senate.

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