



PRIME MINISTER

62/95

STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER, THE HON P J KEATING MP

FRENCH NUCLEAR TESTING

Cabinet met last night to consider further Australia's response to President Chirac's announcement on 13 June that France would resume nuclear testing in the South Pacific.

Cabinet's deliberations were against the background of the French rejection of the efforts of the South Pacific Forum delegation, led by Senator Evans, to persuade France not to proceed with the tests.

Australia's response to the French decision has been strong, unequivocal and concrete.

The Government has attacked the decision in very strong terms - first in a statement I issued on 14 June immediately following on President Chirac's announcement - deploring the decision. I announced in that statement that the Government had frozen cooperation with France in the defence field. The language of that statement was repeated by the Foreign Minister, in Japan at the time, in a series of press conferences, and in a direct telephone conversation with the French Foreign Minister, Mr Herve de Charette. The Acting Foreign Minister called in the French Ambassador and issued a formal protest and our Ambassador did likewise in Paris.

The Government has also taken the lead in promoting a strong South Pacific regional action. On 15 June, I issued a statement as Chair of the Forum condemning the French decision, after consultations with my fellow South Pacific Forum heads of government. On 19 June Senator Evans led a delegation of Forum representatives which conveyed direct to the French Government the region's condemnation of the decision and the deep resentment it has aroused in the whole region.

The Government gave instructions to its embassies abroad to make our position known on the French decision. Many countries have expressed their opposition to the tests, including a number of our closest neighbours.

Australia has also made active use of multilateral forums to leave no doubt as to where we stand on this issue. We have expressed our outrage at the French decision in the United Nations in New York, as well as the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna and the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva.

On 19 June I made a speech in Parliament setting out the Government's views on the decision and Australia's relationship with France.

Concerned about flow-on consequences of the French decision, I have instructed our Ambassador in Washington to welcome the continued US commitment to its moratorium and urge the United States to maintain its leadership in negotiating a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) in terms acceptable not only to the nuclear weapon states but the wider international community. Our Ambassadors in Beijing, London and Moscow will also be making representations to the other nuclear weapon states in favour of the moratorium on testing and early conclusion of the CTBT.

By any measure this amounts to an unequivocal response. I am in no doubt that the French are clear about our views.

Last night, Cabinet - after hearing a report and recommendations from Senator Evans - decided upon a series of further measures now to be taken and in the light of the outcome of the Forum delegation's visit to France. Covering actions at the bilateral, regional and global level, these measures are in line with the Government's consistent policy on this issue which has been to respond in a measured, graduated way, leaving open every avenue for France to respond to South Pacific concerns.

The full details of the proposed measures are set out in the attachment. In broad outline, they are as follows:

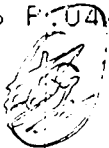
- The Government has decided that Australia's Ambassador in Paris is to be recalled for urgent consultations and briefing on how Australia can best continue to react to the French decision.
- The Government has decided to extend the curtailment of defence contacts with France in the areas of ship and aircraft visits, training, senior officer visits, material acquisition, and defence-related agreements and arrangements. The senior ADF representative in Paris will be recalled. (In relation to the curtailment of aircraft visits, Defence will take the operational steps required to continue to provide the same level of maritime surveillance to the Pacific Island countries.)
- The Government will convene a special meeting of South Pacific Environment Ministers to discuss the environmental impact of testing.
- The Government will be consulting with Forum countries on possible regional measures including the suspension of France's status as a South Pacific Forum dialogue partner for the duration of testing; a possible boycott by individual Forum countries of the South Pacific Games to be held in French Polynesia in August; and the formation of a Forum Regional Action Committee to coordinate responses to France's decision, mobilise and support community campaigns in Forum countries, and report to the Madang Forum in September.
- The Government will be consulting with Forum countries on the desirability of a public information campaign being mobilised in France to sensitise public opinion to the strength of regional opposition to French testing and the reasons for it.

- At a wider international level, Australian delegations and representatives will take advantage of all available opportunities to register Australian and regional opposition to French testing in the UN and all other appropriate multilateral bodies, including where appropriate through the initiation of resolutions.
- A high-level officials mission will be sent to nuclear weapons states to argue the case for an acceptably drafted and quickly negotiated CTBT.

While it is not proposed to embark upon any trade or other direct economic restrictions, it should be noted that the existing policy of entering into no new contracts for the sale of uranium to France until France enters into a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty will remain in force.

The Government will keep the implementation and impact of the above measures under close review in the months ahead. We are determined to do everything we possibly and reasonably can to ensure that France understands the nature and extent of Australian and South Pacific opposition to its test resumption decision, and acts accordingly.

CANBERRA
23 June 1995



AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO FRENCH RESUMPTION OF NUCLEAR TESTS: ADDITIONAL MEASURES

A. BILATERAL

Diplomatic

- (1) Recall Ambassador Brown from Paris for urgent consultations and briefing on the Government's response to date to France's decision.

Defence

- (2) Recall the senior ADF Representative in Paris.
- (3) Restrict Australian bilateral defence contracts with France in the following manner

(i) Ships and Aircraft Visits

- Suspend ship and aircraft visits to France and French Pacific territories except where such visits are related to humanitarian and disaster relief activities. The suspension will remain in force until France ceases nuclear testing in the Pacific. This will include the cancellation of:
 - : a planned visit to Noumea by HMAS NEWCASTLE in September to participate in New Caledonia VP celebrations;
 - : two maritime surveillance Fremantle Class Patrol Boat visits planned for later this year; and
 - : Maritime Patrol Aircraft visits to Noumea.
- French military ships and aircraft will not be permitted to visit Australia while the French nuclear testing program continues except where such visits are related to humanitarian or disaster relief activities.

(ii) Training

- Suspend the following training activities until France ceases nuclear testing:
 - : attendance by French students at the Joint Services Staff College in Canberra;
 - : attendance by an Australian officer at a French Military Staff course in Paris;
 - : ADF French language students visiting New Caledonia for language training; and

: the visit by the Army Technical Staff officers course to French companies later this year.

(iii) Senior Officer Visits

- Suspend visits by senior Defence Organisation officers (one star and above) to France and by French senior officers to Australia.

(iv) Materiel Acquisition

- Apply for the duration of French nuclear testing the following restrictions to the Defence Major Capital Equipment Procurement program:

- : no new procurement arrangements will be entered into with the French Government;
- : proposals by French companies to bid as prime contractors will be considered for approval case by case by the Minister for Defence.

(v) Defence Related Agreements and Arrangements

- Not progress proposed agreements in the following areas while the French nuclear testing program continues:

- : French-Australian collaboration on Naval Equipment;
- : a Cooperative Defence Logistics Support Agreement;
- : an MOU on the implementation of the existing agreement on Collaboration on Defence Research and Technology;
- : an arrangement for the exchange of classified maritime information.

B. REGIONAL

(4) Consult with South Pacific Forum countries on suspension of France as a South Pacific Dialogue Partner for the duration of French testing.

(5) Consult with the South Pacific Forum countries on the establishment of a Regional Action Committee to:

- (i) coordinate Forum follow-up to the Forum Mission's talks with France;
- (ii) develop a Forum campaign on nuclear testing in the South Pacific to
 - maintain a flow of information to regional governments and groups;

- assist in channelling community views to appropriate UN and other international bodies; and
 - assist in channelling community views to target French community groups such as NGOs, political parties and schools;
- (iii) report on the Committee's activities to the leaders at the Madang Forum meeting in September.
- (6) Convene a special meeting of South Pacific Environment Ministers to discuss the environmental impact of testing and the possible establishment of a monitoring program.
- (7) Consult with South Pacific Forum countries on the development of a public information campaign - including, for example, exhibitions, newspaper articles, television and cinema advertisements - to be undertaken in France to sensitise French public opinion to the strength of regional opposition to French testing and the reasons for it.
- (8) Consult with South Pacific Forum countries on the possible boycott of the South Pacific games to be held in French Polynesia in August this year.

C. GLOBAL

- (9) Send as soon as possible a high level officials mission to the Nuclear Weapon States to argue the case for a strong and effective Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and accelerate the negotiating process for it.
- (10) Take advantage of all available opportunities, including where appropriate through the initiation of resolutions, to register Australian opposition to French testing in UN and other appropriate multilateral forums, particularly
- : the Conference on Disarmament;
 - : the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Auckland in November;
 - : the International Atomic Energy Agency;
 - : the World Health Organisation, of which Australia is currently an Executive Board member;
 - : the UN General Assembly;
 - : the UN Special Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation;
 - : the UN 50th Anniversary Summit in October;

- : the High-Level Segment of ECOSOC, 4-6 July;
- : the International Oceanographic Commission which is currently meeting in Paris from 13-27 June;
- : the UNESCO Executive Board and General Conference to be held in Paris in October.