



PRIME MINISTER

**TRANSCRIPT OF THE PRIME MINISTER, THE HON P.J. KEATING MP
SPEECH AT LAUNCH OF ANZAC FRIGATE TE KAHA, WILLIAMSTOWN,
SATURDAY, 22 JULY 1995**

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Thank you very much, John White (Chief Executive, Transfield Defence Systems), Prime Minister Jim Bolger and Joan, I'm very pleased to see you in Australia on this occasion, our Defence Ministers Warren Cooper and Robert Ray, Carlo Salteri (Transfield Chairman), Rear Admiral Walsh, the Hon Bill Baxter representing the Premier, parliamentary colleagues, members of the Defence Force, Ambassadors, High Commissioners, Reverend David North and Bishop Vercoe and ladies and gentlemen.

One of the last things that was just said was that ANZAC was a class, it is the name of a class and, of course, as we in this country and New Zealand know, it has always been a class name. It has always stood for the world's best when it came to a fighting force and I don't believe there could be any greater manifestation of our co-operation or the kindred nature of our two countries than to be here for an historic launch of a collaborative project of this kind.

The things we have always believed about our two countries - the common ideals, the common culture, the theatres of war we fought in in defence of liberty - all of these things, I think, are in evidence today in the fact that we have come together as nations in this collaborative exercise to build this class of ships bearing that proud name ANZAC. I am delighted to be here on this occasion for the launching of Te Kaha.

It is, I think, a magnificent ship, state of the art and world class. One of the things, I am sure, that we do in Australia and New Zealand these days is build good ships and maybe this will have more fighting power than an America's Cup yacht, certainly more hitting power although no doubt we could commission them - America's Cup yachts that is - with some armaments. They would be a pretty fearful thing, but this, I think, represents as good as it is likely to be world wide.

What is important, I think, about this is a recognition by Australia and New Zealand that in our own defence we need these capacities and capabilities. The thing about this ship which will be true of no other, or very few we've had in the past, is that it will be serviced here in Australasia because it is built here in Australasia and one of the things about our defence will now be that we will focus on our regional strengths, our industrial capabilities, our capacity for research and development, for design not simply of ships but of combat systems and weapon systems because with the finish of the Cold War what we are now seeing, where once everything was internationalised, what we are now seeing is the regionalisation of difficulties, where regional tensions come to the fore and where countries organise themselves regionally.

I think this is something which we are doing. We are building a naval ship building capacity like this here in Australasia and, of course, in Australia's case we also have a submarine program, we will soon have the Mine Hunter Program and the hydrographic ship. There is a real core naval capacity being built here and one that I think must be comforting to the peoples of Australia and New Zealand, that this capacity exists within our countries. Of course, we have built this and we have innovated the design and developed further the weapon systems, but I think it also reminds us of our important linkages to Europe. John White and Carlo Salteri have already mentioned Blohm and Voss - the Naval architects - and let me also mention Celsius Tech the Swedish Company that designed the combat systems in which we have been able to augment.

But, beyond all that what I would like to do is to congratulate Transfield on putting together this capacity to develop these ships, to be able to produce them at this quality and on time. This is a great compliment to them as a company and to the workforce of these yards that they could harness these skills and give such commitment and such pride to the building of such a vessel. Without them, of course, this ship wouldn't be here and we need to think about them and to thank them.

I would like to, just again, dwell on the major point that having an Australian and New Zealand Prime Minister together at the launch of a ship in which we are involved collaboratively, I think, says again much about our relationship, says how seriously we regard the first duty of any government and that is to make certain of the security of its people and to have a competent Defence Force. With this Defence Force here today, the Defence Force of our countries in Australia and New Zealand, will see this augmentation coming here today and I am very proud to be involved. I'd like to again, congratulate everybody concerned and most particularly wish Te Kaha well and, of course, naturally and especially all who will sail in her. Thank you.

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