



# PRIME MINISTER

**TRANSCRIPT OF THE PRIME MINISTER, THE HON P J KEATING MP  
JOINT DOORSTOP WITH THE GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE  
VIETNAMESE COMMUNIST PARTY DO MUOI AT THE KILORI  
CONFERENCE CENTRE, TANNUM SANDS, QUEENSLAND,  
3 AUGUST 1995**

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**PM:** I would like to say that we are delighted to have the General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam, Do Muoi, and to say that what we seek with Vietnam is not a relationship, but a partnership. And that partnership with the General Secretary has come in a very vigorous visit. He has visited the ACT, Victoria, NSW and now Queensland. We are looking at areas of co-operation between us, and ways we might be able to help Vietnam develop. Vietnam is a country of 70 million people, has just joined ASEAN, it has just exchanged Ambassadors with the United States, joined the Community of Nations in the Asia Pacific - it now needs the help of countries like Australia to integrate fully in the community of nations around here. So today, of course - you know Vietnam is rich in bauxite - we have been looking at bauxite and alumina. The General Secretary has also looked at telecommunications, of which, of course, we have a very large presence in Vietnam with Telstra. And we are looking at other aspects - including tourism aspects - today. Tourism is another great opportunity for the Vietnamese economy. So, I am delighted that the General Secretary made the visit to Australia - for such a high-ranking person to have come, we are very greatly honoured, and I hope that this will lead to other cooperation between us.

**DM:** First of all, I would like to thank the Honourable Prime Minister for inviting me to visit Australia. Also, I would like to say...(inaudible)...for the attention given to my people, and most of all to you, I would like to convey our friendship from the Vietnamese people to the Australian people. (The Secretary General says that for himself) and other members of the delegation...(inaudible)...this visit is one of the longest visits we have made - we find Australia a peaceful country and you have not any wars for hundreds of years which is contrary to our situation. We are desirous...(inaudible)...for peace. Australia is also a

very rich country - the people are leading a happy life. And I have found all sorts of friendships from Australia, especially towards Vietnam. There have been ups and downs in our history, but history is history. I believe from now on, between us, that we will always have eternal friendship.

I came to visit the Honourable Governor General, I had working session with the Honourable Prime Minister, and with the different Ministers. And everywhere where we have been pleased to find friendship and cooperation. ... (inaudible) ... most thankful to the Honourable Prime Minister and the people of Australia. We know that Australia has helped Vietnam people all the way. Yesterday I had a meeting with the Trade Union organisation... (inaudible) ... They supported our anti-American War and they are continuing to support us in our professional reconstruction. We are grateful... (inaudible) ... of projects which are very efficient. This time the Australian Government has signed an agreement with us to assist us in building a huge bridge. This is one of the biggest projects so far in Vietnam worth \$70 - 80 million. And the Australian Government has also assisted us in making economic zones in the South, and also assistance is coming in the form of personnel training in health care and we highly appreciate the activities carried out by the Fred Hollows Foundation, which is assisting Vietnam in treating cataracts. It is an activity of high significance to the lives of the Vietnamese people, because many Vietnamese people have eye problems. ... (inaudible) ... We are grateful to Australia for this project, and we will speed up the necessary procedures so that projects can soon be put into operation - to bring about bright eyes to the people. Apart from the non-refundable assistance, the Australian Government - personified by his Honourable the Prime Minister - has decided to lend us... (inaudible) ... During my visit I have met with business people here, and we had discussions on multi-.. corporations possibilities. We want to do the metalurgy, we want to produce electricity and new fertiliser in cooperation with Australia. We want to do the telecommunications with Australia as well. In short, we are very poor and we want to do everything. In particular, we would like to do the dairy and the meat production and sugar cane production with Australia because Vietnam is extremely poor after the War and the livelihood of the people is very low. 50 per cent of the children are undernourished. The main task of the Vietnamese leadership is to improve the livelihood of the people and to fight malnutrition among the children. One of the main purposes of the visit to Australia is to visit the meat, dairy and sugar cane production. In principle, the Prime Minister and the other leaders of the Australian Government (inaudible) support it by the business groups here. They have shown their readiness and willingness to do that and while we are considering the ..... action. Your heart is already there. What you need from us is to streamline the cumbersome procedures. Now I can say my visit to Australia is highly successful and what is best of all is the friendship between our two countries - Vietnam and Australia. That can serve as the groundwork to develop our multilateral cooperation and to materialise our cooperation and friendship we need long lasting peace and stability. We need to be rid of war in our region.

We need to eliminate all kinds of nuclear weapons from the region. We need to eliminate the weapons of mass destruction from this region. We need to join the struggle so that forever as we build stability, friendship, cooperation and development in our region. Thank you.

J: General Secretary do you feel snubbed by the boycott of your visit by the Leader of the Opposition, John Howard?

DM: It is quite normal. Now, well, he may have some other business. He has sent his representative. Well in a welcome to you, I would like to send my greetings. I hope that there will be only friendship between us. I haven't had anything to say with the Vietnamese community here because of many reasons. There are tens of thousands of Vietnamese who have come here for a living. We thank the Prime Minister, the Government of Australia and the people of Australia for helping the Vietnamese people both in living and working conditions. We have asked our compatriots who are living here to fulfil all the obligations of the citizens of the country and at the same time in my country they can enjoy their rights. We also advise that we offer to contribute what needs to achieving greater prosperity and happiness to Australia and they must work harder to have better lives and send their children to school so they that can have an excellent education. This is one of the best conditions under which you can give your children a good education. (inaudible) They can make some contribution to the reconstruction of the country of Vietnam after decades of war and we also advise them to unite with each other and respect the local laws.

J: [inaudible]

PM: Vietnamese people in Australia and in Vietnam say that, I think, Australia wants a partnership with Vietnam that we want to be able to help the Vietnamese people. We want good people to people relationships. We know the War has cost them, not only their liberty for so long, but also their standard of living. Unfortunately, they have lost much of the opportunities the rest of us have had. We would like to help them catch up as quickly as they can. Thank you.

J: Prime Minister, just before you go, (inaudible) the State election outcome in Gladstone?

PM: I don't think so. I mean I had a most friendly welcome yesterday at the Graingrowers Council - not a traditional Labor spot. I had a very friendly reception provided for me here in Gladstone yesterday. So I think that, no, I don't think the press should take up the urban myth, the panaceas, which have been put about by the spin doctors. I am finding relations in Queensland are as good as they have ever been.

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