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PRIME MINISTER

90/95

**STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC FORUM,
THE PRIME MINISTER, THE HON P J KEATING MP**

LATEST TEST OF A NUCLEAR WEAPON BY CHINA

As current Chair of the South Pacific Forum, on behalf of my Forum colleagues I condemn the latest test of a nuclear weapon by China.

China has once again shown disregard for international opposition to nuclear testing by carrying out its second test since the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in May 1995.

China and other nuclear weapons states must come to terms with the imminent ban on nuclear testing for all time. They must consider carefully the impact of the changed global security situation on the role of nuclear weapons.

Forum leaders welcome the continuation by the United States of America, Russia and the United Kingdom of their moratoriums on nuclear testing, as well as the recent announcements by the USA and France of their commitment to a truly comprehensive test ban treaty (CTBT). These are a significant boost to current negotiations for a CTBT. Forum leaders reiterate their strong support for finalisation and signature of the Treaty in 1996.

We look to China and France to desist from further testing as the CTBT negotiations enter this final, critical stage. The heads of government have noted China's commitment to sign such a treaty. France has given a similar commitment. The current nuclear testing programs of these two countries are inconsistent with their commitment to exercise 'utmost restraint' on nuclear testing pending the conclusion of a CTBT, and will sour the atmosphere of the negotiations.

Forum countries, along with others, are considering a suitable resolution to be put before the United Nations General Assembly to pressure China and France to reconsider their testing programs. Additionally, Forum members will be considering action in other international forums to make our opposition known and to press the Chinese Government to stop testing.

Nuclear weapons have cast a great shadow over humanity in this past half century. South Pacific Forum heads of government call on China to contribute to world peace by eliminating the testing of nuclear weapons, thereby taking another significant step on the journey to the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons.

**CANBERRA
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