



PRIME MINISTER

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

SOUTH PACIFIC NUCLEAR FREE ZONE TREATY

I warmly welcome the announcements by the governments of the United States, the United Kingdom and France of their intention to sign the Protocols in the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone (SPNFZ) Treaty in the first half of 1996.

The People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation have signed and ratified the Protocols open to them. All five nuclear weapon states have now formally recognised the desire of South Pacific countries to live in a region free of nuclear weapons and nuclear testing.

There are three Protocols to the Treaty under which the nuclear weapon states agree not to use or threaten to use nuclear explosive devices against any other SPNFZ member and undertake not to test nuclear explosive devices within the territorial boundaries defined by the Treaty.

Australia has worked tirelessly towards this objective, one which we have shared with the nations of the South Pacific. We took a leading role in the establishment of the SPNFZ as a means of preserving the peace and security of the region and its environment.

The decisions of the governments of the United States, France and the United Kingdom will send a strong message to the international community on non-proliferation and disarmament. This will help drive negotiations for the completion of a truly Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty in 1996.

In taking this welcome decision the French Government has also underlined the anomaly of its nuclear testing program in the South Pacific.

Each test is an affront to the aspirations of the region embodied in the SPNFZ Treaty.

France's decision will not lessen our resolve to go on campaigning actively for an immediate end to French testing.

**CANBERRA
21 OCTOBER 1995**