

NEW ZEALAND POLICY ON NUCLEAR POWERED SHIPS
AND SHIPS BEARING NUCLEAR ARMS*

Mr Tanaka: I would like to question you a little more specifically on nuclear issues. Do you think the ANZUS Treaty and the new non nuclear forces are compatible?

PM. Yes.

T. So how?

PM. Well the ANZUS Treaty is almost spectacularly short of specifics; that's one of the considerable advantages of it. It is actually a statement of our commitment to each other: Australia and the United States. It is an honest expression of the fact that we are in it together, and it does not go into the great specificity of other defence treaties and how a command structure is established. It is a charter for a working relationship in defence, and that of course means what the partners agree it shall mean, and it was concluded a third of a century ago when there was not anything like the scale of nuclear use and certainly no global spectre of the nuclear deterrent. It had certainly started to emerge, but the world was not positioned then as it is today and from New Zealand's point of view it was really traditionally a conventional weapon defensive alliance. We have of course developed in different ways amongst the partners. Australia, which has with its new government formed a very clear position, that is from a tradition of a very much greater strategic involvement by the United States defence interests with an infrastructure of defence bases and a much more intensive pattern of visiting than New Zealand has developed. I think, as well, that the Treaty requires consultation, disclosure, cooperation. The United States is a very important ally of New Zealand, and it would be contrary to the wish of the majority of New Zealanders, and it would be politically unacceptable for New Zealand, to make some gesture of unilateral withdrawal from ANZUS, and that's definitely not the intention of my Government.

*(The New Zealand Government has a policy of not permitting such ships to call into New Zealand ports. The United States has a policy of not indicating whether a vessel is nuclear armed. In this interview between the New Zealand Prime Minister, Mr. Lange, and Mr. Tanaka of the Japanese newspaper Asahi Shimbun the relevant issues are canvassed. This is followed by the text of a private member bill which would seek to give statutory support to the Government's policy by way of creating a criminal offence.)

T. The US has a policy of not qualifying whether a naval vessel is nuclear armed or not. This is a problem for the Japanese also. If you reject all the non-nuclear or the nuclear armed ships, it means that you will reject all the naval vessels of the US, since there is no way of clarification.

PM. Well this is a problem/ when you are using the word verification My own feeling is that one ought to be able to trust one's allies, and I would certainly not want to be heard saying I distrust the United States. In the end, after our negotiations and talking with them, the policy is accepted, then I certainly won't be clambouring around on board their ships to check their word. I don't expect them you see to change their policy of disclosing, but I do expect, if the policy is worked through, for it to be honoured. So just as you in Japan have the right to that expectation.

T. So you think you can get some assurance from the United States that some ships are actually non-nuclear armed by an official statement on the part of the United States?

PM. No, as I said. I don't expect the United States - it would be a very radical departure from the United States policy to make disclosure.

T. Not disclosure, but the general statement that the United States will respect the wishes ...

PM...Well clearly that's one of the points of pursuing this policy.

T. How do you think that the port of calls are essential to the United States fleet? That the United States should say that without port of / ^{call} there is no Treaty understanding at all?

PM. Yes I am aware of those statements, and that is a matter which I shall be taking up with them again in September.

T. I don't think the port of calls are significant, so do you think that they are just flag showing - showing a symbol of the alliance?

PM. What has happened to the alliance is simply that it has become a code word now for nuclear ships and port calls. The alliance is very much broader than that. In October we will be giving a land and air joint exercise over New Zealand.

I think by the end of the year New Zealand would have come to a realisation that ANZUS means more than port calls. At the moment the Secretary of State for the United States is I think correct in his observation about the significance of port calls because, honestly, in New Zealand they have become what ANZUS is about. In fact it is a very much broader thing than that. I don't propose to go into the strategic importance of them; the defence significance of them or the possibilities of their continuing. That is a matter which I am reserving comment on, in New Zealand and abroad, until such time as I have gone into more talks with the United States.

T. The Secretary of State said that the United States would not enter New Zealand ports for about half a year. So will you have enough time to negotiate with them?

PM. What happened was that the election in New Zealand was on July 14, and on July 15 I flew into Wellington to meet Secretary of State Shultz, because I considered that it was important to show a degree of goodwill. In turn he was fair enough to say that there was a chance to talk, and the facts are that we do not have a visit proposed here for some months yet to come. The next combined exercise is, I think, called "Sea Eagle", which is to take place in the Tasman in February next year. Its operational base of port will be actually in Sydney, not in New Zealand, but the pattern has been after such joint exercises for a vessel or two on returning from the exercise to the United States to call at a New Zealand port. Now that currently would seem to be the first possible visit, and so we have some months in which we can talk.

T. Japan has denied the port calls to nuclear armed ships, and we are maintaining the alliance with the United States. Can you negotiate with the United States using the precedent of Japan?

PM. Well there are lots of propositions one could put up. One is the Japanese one. Another one is the position of some countries within NATO, Norway for instance. But in the end, you see, I don't suppose that the arguments have any fundamental validity, because the strategic significance would certainly vary within every situation. While it might be a useful argument to call in my aid that, for instance, Japan or for instance Norway have different understandings with the United States or in fact that Australia, in respect of weaponry, has for its B52 base in Darwin a special understanding, I mean those are specific ad hoc responses to the particular situation and what we are doing really is creating a specific understanding about New Zealand, and in that respect I guess you are not really trying to argue on the basis of what some other countries have done, though the other countries show that there is a willingness on the part of the United States not to have some monolithic word engraved in stone understanding about it.

Nuclear Free Zones

PM. You have a problem with that one. The reality is that you are going to have in our policy talks about a South Pacific nuclear-weapons-free-zone the nomenclature is probably not important, but what it means is what's important. And it means really that there will be a first step taken to scale back or to stop nations in the Pacific venturing into nuclear weaponry. The cessation of testing, prohibition from dumping and a veto on the installation, deployment, manufacture or use of nuclear weaponry. That will be the common commitment insofar as it is the current policy of the governments that we will be talking to initially that they do not engage in those activities. We will be essentially, I suppose, sealing in the status quo and preserving any intensification or thought of a build up - it is in that respect I suppose, a refinement

or enhancement of a non-proliferation treaty type mechanics. From there it will be possible, I believe, to have a more demanding regime, but I am persuaded that we ought to start from our areas of agreement and build on them, rather than trying to get an agreement, which frankly is unrealistic, because we need to make any zone effective, to have it acknowledged and honoured by those countries, who are essentially the super-power countries, whose cooperation we obviously need.

T. So you don't think there will be any initiative taken in the coming Conference ...

PM. Oh yes we are going to take an initiative in Tuvalu, and the Australians are taking the initiative, and we have some suggestions to make about that, and in 1975 we took the steps which eventually became enshrined in the United Nations Resolution on 12 December 1975, which confirmed the principle of the South Pacific nuclear weapons free zone. But all I am saying about nuclear weapons free zones is that when you start to walk, you don't run a marathon, and that's where we are.

New Zealand's Economic Vulnerability

T. So in the end you are just trusting the United States not to have any radical reaction to New Zealand by the fact that you reject nuclear-armed ships or nuclear-powered ships. In general terms, economically, culturally, socially, politically everything - the vulnerability of New Zealand ...

PM. The whole concept of economic vulnerability is interesting. I started the interview by talking to you about my feeling of vulnerability, for instance with regard to Japan. There is absolutely no doubt that New Zealand is vulnerable given our extraordinary dependence on exports and our historical commitment to some major markets and, if you are talking about the United States, an absolutely critical trading partner. If you are to talk about mere economic situations, there is an enormous potential for forms of political retaliation. There can be protectionism measures taken by any country. But that you see, in the end, is not the issue. The United States does not operate as some sort of political retaliator. We have our traditional association

with the United States because we share common legacies, democratic traditions, significant genetic stock-sharing even from mainland Europe, and we have had a long period of association right from the time of European settlement in New Zealand. We have lots of friends, and indeed we were at pains as a Government to allow our airline to make a commercial decision which would have upset our friends in Europe, but would have brought some \$6-7⁰⁰ million worth of New Zealand business to a major American plane-maker. That type of association is now so deeply entrenched I do not regard us as being at risk of the United States. That is not the behaviour which they have shown in other periods of edginess or negotiations which have adopted, and there have been specific assurances from Secretary of State Shultz that that is not part of the United States strategy.

PROHIBITION OF NUCLEAR VESSELS AND WEAPONS

ANALYSIS

Title
1 Short Title

2 Prohibition of entry of nuclear powered ship or ship or aircraft carrying nuclear weapons

A BILL INTITULED

An Act to prohibit the entry into New Zealand or its territorial sea of any nuclear-powered ship or any aircraft or ship carrying nuclear weapons

5 BE IT ENACTED by the General Assembly of New Zealand in Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1. **Short Title**—This Act may be cited as the Prohibition of Nuclear Vessels and Weapons Act 1984.

10 2. **Prohibition of entry of nuclear-powered ship or ship or aircraft carrying nuclear weapons**—(1) The entry into New Zealand or its territorial sea (as defined in section 3 of the Territorial Sea and Exclusive Economic Zone Act 1977) of any nuclear-powered ship or any ship or aircraft carrying
15 nuclear weapons is hereby prohibited.

(2) Any person who causes or authorises the entry of any ship or aircraft in contravention of subsection (1) of this section commits an offence, and shall be liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding \$500,000.