

TRANSCRIPT OF THE SPEECH BY THE AUSTRALIAN PRIME MINISTER, THE HON JOHN HOWARD MP, AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL POLICE INTERNATIONAL DEPLOYMENT GROUP TRAINING VILLAGE MAJURA, CANBERRA.

Thank you very much Senator Chris Ellison, Mick Keelty the Commissioner of the Australian Federal Police, other distinguished guests, representatives of the Ngunnawal people, the representatives of the State Police Services, Dr Peter Veenka, the Dunning family, former Police Commissioners, ladies and gentlemen.

Events of the last five years have totally transformed both the demands and the expectations of the Australian community on the Australian Federal Police. In that five year period we've seen the threatening arrival of international terrorism, and we've seen the emergence of an ongoing need on the part of this country in cooperation with our friends in the Pacific Region to involve ourselves in the restoration of conditions of law and order and cooperation with the police services and governments of those countries.

It's been an extraordinary change in a short period of time. The AFP has been required to adjust them simply being the federal law enforcement body working in cooperation with state police services in dealing with trans-national crime and particularly issues relating to drug trafficking, to being a force that works in cooperation with the police forces of other countries to track down the murderers of Australian citizens, as they did so magnificently in Indonesia in the wake of the Bali attack, but also to work as they have done, and are continuing to do so magnificently in countries such as the Solomons-to provide the protection for ordinary life of which Chris Ellison spoke, and also to provide the assurance to would be foreign investors in those countries that they can make their investments and go about their lives without fear of murder or interruption, because unless you can create circumstances of local stability and you can offer people who might want to come and invest in your country or be involved in helping your country, protection from gangs and crime than you really have no hope of emerging as a viable society.

So in that short period of time the Federal Police has had demands placed on it, which go beyond the demands I think, that have been placed on an organisation in terms of change that any that I've seen at a federal level. And I want to take this opportunity of congratulating and thanking the Federal Police Commissioner, Mick Keelty, to thank him and all of his colleagues for the fantastic, the professional way in which the AFP has responded to those demands.

The Government as I think you are all aware has massively increased the financial resources available to the Australian Federal Police. We've done that very deliberately and we've done that unapologetically because it's a far greater priority now than ever before. But we are well satisfied, may I say with the response-we are well satisfied indeed with the response, the reputation of the federal police has deservedly risen during that time. It was always high, but it's risen to greater heights during that time and I'm glad that there are representatives of the state and territory police forces here today because that

cooperation is crucial-the on the ground, the first response to community crime is still overwhelmingly in this country, the remit of state and territory police services. It will always be like that and it will therefore always be necessary for us to work in very close collaboration.

But it's really the overseas manifestation of the AFP that we are about today, and this training centre is a great concept and it will provide priceless preparation and training-not only for the men and women of the AFP but also the men and women of other police forces in our region. Regional cooperation is crucial, regional cooperation is the foundation now of the active partnership between Australia and countries in our own region. The stability of countries in our region is crucial to the stability of Australia, we are forever part of this region and as the largest and most powerful country, economically and politically in our region-in the immediate region, the Pacific, we have a responsibility beyond others to help a friend, to borrow the code name of the Solomon Islands operation. And that was a marvellous example of helping a friend, and I suspect that we will be helping other friends in the time ahead because we all have an interest in the stability of the region.

As Chris Ellison has remarked, the death of Adam Dunning was a reminder of the price that sometimes that members of police forces and our military pay in advancing and protecting the interest of this country. Now I, in welcoming this opportunity to address you, I want to thank the men and women of the Australian Federal Police for what they have done-especially over the last five years. I want to commend their continued efforts. I want to commend them for their great Australian capacity and our visitors will forgive me for focussing on this but Australians do have a capacity to combine a law enforcement or military role in another country with forming a friendship with the locals which is second to none. And it's at the heart of the success of any overseas mission that you not only assert and project power and authority, but you also win hearts and minds and win friends. And perhaps by dint of our culture, our egalitarian spirit, whatever it is, we have a capacity to do that and that's what Ben McDevitt's men and women did in the Solomons, it's what people did in East Timor, it's what the Australian Military I know did in East Timor and are doing now in the Al Muthanna Province in southern Iraq-it's one of the things that separates us in a positive way. Now having said that, forgive our visitors for that little local plug, but I mean it very sincerely because it's a very important part of winning the battle. You win the battle using the force that's needed but you also ultimately secure the victory by winning the respect and the affection of people you've been sent there to help. And I think the sort of training that you get in a centre like this-not only the training to arm you for the physical exposure and the surprise attempts at hostage taking and the like, but also the advice and instruction in relation to the local sensitivities and interests of people. I think all of that is overwhelmingly so important, not only to our military personnel but on this occasion particularly to our police.

So can I thank you again and just say on behalf of the Australian Government, and I know on behalf of all Australians how much we admire and respect all the men and women who wear the uniform of police personnel in this country. You are vital to our way of life, and you are vital to the protection of the wonderful circumstances in which Australians live. And to the extent that we can project the values of Australian society in a positive, cooperative way to

other parts of world, it is greatly to the credit of this country and in that sprit I have very great pleasure in declaring this centre open.

Thank you.