

subject: Foreign Policy July 1980
South Pacific Forum

CONFIDENTIAL



AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION

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THE HIGH COMMISSIONER

PRIME MINISTER'S
PERSONAL MESSAGE
SERIAL No. TS784

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10 April 1984

Dear Prime Minister,

Mr Hawke has asked me to pass to you the following text of a letter concerning the question of the most appropriate form of South Pacific regional organisations:

Begins:

Dear Prime Minister,

You will be aware from your Government's membership and participation in the work of the South Pacific Commission, and that of your Pacific Territory, that the question of the most appropriate form of South Pacific regional organisations has been under consideration for some time. Australia has followed the issue closely as a member of the South Pacific Commission and of the South Pacific Forum, the organisation which comprises the Heads of Government of the independent and self-governing countries of the South Pacific.

At the Fourteenth South Pacific Forum Meeting in Canberra last August a Resolution was passed calling for investigation of the concept of a Single Regional Organisation, in the expectation that such a body would be more cost effective in the long term than existing arrangements. Member countries were agreed that greater emphasis should be given to establishing in the region a new and lasting relationship among developed and developing countries and territories to promote regional development. The terms of the Resolution specifically recognised the desirability of ensuring the continued participation of those outside the region, who have to date played an important role in assisting regional development, on the basis of mutual respect and constructive partnership among the Forum countries, the Island Territories and the metropolitan countries.

To undertake consideration of the political, legal, constitutional, and financial implications of a Single Regional Organisation, the Forum decided to appoint a Committee of Ministers of Foreign Affairs from four

member countries. It was intended that this Committee should undertake consultations with concerned parties, including the Governments of France, the United States and the United Kingdom, to inform them of the Forum's views and to ascertain their views on participation in a single Regional Organisation. In my current capacity as Chairman of the Forum, I was requested to convey to your Government the Forum's decision and the wish of the Committee of Ministers of Foreign Affairs to undertake consultations with your Government.

I am advised that the Four-Nation Ministerial Committee, composed of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Fiji, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and Tonga, has begun its work of considering the issues entailed in a single regional organisation. The first meeting, which was held in Port Moresby from 19-20 March, passed very successfully and will be followed by a further meeting scheduled for Wellington on 9-10 April. Apart from informing you of these developments, it is my hope as Chairman of the Forum that your Government will be agreeable to receiving the Committee of Ministers of Foreign Affairs for consultations, as well as facilitating visits by the Committee to your Pacific Territory in connection with its mission.

Yours sincerely,

(R.J.L. Hawke)

Ends:

You may also wish to know that Mr Hawke has written in similar terms to the Heads of Government of France and the United States.

The original copy of this letter will be sent on as soon as it is received.

Yours sincerely

Parsons

A.R. PARSONS

The Rt Hon. Margaret Thatcher, M.P.
Prime Minister of Great Britain
LONDON SW1