

27 November 2018

MEDIA RELEASE

TITLE: China and the new Australian initiatives

One thing which puzzles me is the media stories about China and its plans to set up so called military installations on Niue. They also speculate we have borrowed millions from China and all kinds of trickery.

Let's be clear: we have not borrowed anything from China or ANYONE else. We have not agreed for any Chinese military base or ANYONE else to set up any military bases.

We have not sold our fishing rights except under the United States Tuna Treaty with Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) member countries.

The new relationship we are forging with Australia is based on a number of discussions we had with former Prime Ministers and foreign ministers. The new Australian Prime Minister has given us an opportunity to deal with them directly rather than through New Zealand. This includes their allocation of bank loan funds as well as their support for climate change mitigation.

All the new initiatives announced: music to my ears. Once we are given more details we'll present proposals to them.

APEC was meeting with members in the Asia Pacific countries. Papua New Guinea Prime Minister Peter O'Neill invited Pacific leaders thus giving an opportunity to participate and meet world leaders.

The media in New Zealand is on a frenzy of speculation including our split from New Zealand. There is no split. We enjoy a very rewarding healthy relationship based on our constitution and long history.

The media likes to speculate and their latest is that the audits are not being done because we're hiding something. The auditors met the Public Accounts Committee and stated that the SOE accounts are cash accounts and not accrual accounts which they prefer. They need to get someone to deal with these cash accounts and finalise everything as soon as possible.

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