

X1V USE OF FORCE AND WAR:French Nuclear Tests

In response to a question based on a report that the French Foreign Minister, Mr. Cheysson, had remarked that Australia was not worried about nuclear testing, the Foreign Minister replied (Hansard, Debates, House of Representatives, 29 February 1984):

**FRENCH NUCLEAR TESTING IN THE  
PACIFIC**

**Mr KENT**—Has the attention of the Minister for Foreign Affairs been drawn to remarks made by the French Foreign Minister, Mr Cheysson, that Australia was not worried about nuclear testing in the Pacific? Will the Minister ensure that Australia's strong opposition to French nuclear testing in the Pacific is clearly conveyed to Mr Cheysson? Finally, will the Minister confer with his colleague, the Minister for Trade, to see that our ban on the export of Australian uranium to France is strictly maintained?

**Mr HAYDEN**—There were reports that the Foreign Minister of France, Mr Claude Cheysson, had commented that Australia was not too deeply committed in its opposition to French nuclear testing in the Pacific. If that statement were made it would be wrong and it is hard to understand, if it were made, how it could have been made. The newspaper in which it was reported has a propensity for giving somewhat colourful interpretations of what has been said by public figures from time to time; so it is possible that it is not an accurate reflection of what Mr Cheysson said. Australia's representatives overseas are seeking to check on the matter. Certainly, when Mr Cheysson was here earlier it was made clear to him that our opposition was deeply felt, was bipartisan and was supported by the Australian public. When the reports of this alleged statement appeared the Deputy Prime Minister released a very firm public statement repudiating any implication that we might not be genuinely concerned about this matter. We are and, in fact, we are currently engaged in consultations with the French on the matter of nuclear issues generally. The consultations commenced with a discussion of our very fierce concern about that testing in the Pacific. The Prime Minister announced the trade embargoes last year and they remain firmly in place.