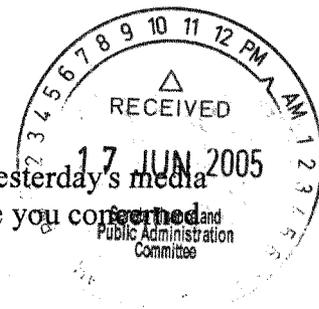


CASSIDY:

Okay, Gallipoli now and the roadworks that are going on there. A report in yesterday's media suggested that some bones have been uncovered by the earthworks there. Are you concerned about this?



PRIME MINISTER:

Well, earlier today the Ambassador spoke to my office about this and I am told that the Ambassador has spoken to the photographer in question and the response was that one of the bones had disappeared and the other one he believed had been covered up by the works, so therefore it was not possible to directly check those two particular photographs. Now, generally the Ambassador has spoken - she's gone down to Gallipoli at the instructions of the Foreign Minister and the advice continues to be from the Turkish authorities that archaeological work was carried out before the construction. They are satisfied that no bones had been found or disturbed and they continue to be of the view that if there were any found then the roadworks would stop. Bear in mind, of course, that there was 60,000 Turkish deaths on Gallipoli. It is a very important and a very sacred place to the Turks, as well as to Australians and New Zealanders and many others who also lost thousands of people in that ill-fated assault.

We will continue to be in very close contact with the Turks. The War Graves Commission who we've consulted claim to be satisfied with the explanation that's been given by the Turks. There's nothing odd about remedial or roadworks being carried out because it is necessary to have wider, more effective roadworks because there are more and more people going to the place. So I want to assure your viewers that we are not taking any of these things lightly and when a claim is made we are having it investigated and the best way to do it is to send our Ambassador to the very place and for her to talk to the people who have raised the concerns. And I am not criticising journalists for raising it or anything, I am just making the point that they are trying very conscientiously to respond in a very specific way to the concerns that have been raised.

CASSIDY:

Maybe Australians would be a little less concerned if Anzac Cove was listed on a national heritage list. You talked about this some 18 months ago. What's holding it up?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well, we need the permission of the Turkish government because Anzac Cove is Turkish territory.

CASSIDY:

Are they reluctant to do that?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well, so far they have not agreed. They may feel there are issues of sovereignty involved. Once again we have to understand, and this is a very important, sacred place to Australian, but it is still Turkish territory and there is no way that we can, even with Anzac Cove, say we,

Australia, demand that this or that be done on another country's sovereign territory, and we have to respect that and we have to work our way through these things.

It is a bit simplistic to say, well, we can list arbitrarily without the consent of the country involved the territory of another country and then set about issuing instructions as to how that listed territory is to be treated. The world is not like that and will never be like that.

CASSIDY:

Why would they be reluctant, though, given that a lot of Turkish lives were lost as well? It is an important site to them?

PRIME MINISTER:

They may think maybe the appropriate thing is to have it listed in a similar fashion on some Turkish register because it is Turkish territory. This is an issue I will pursue further with the Turkish Prime Minister who I expect to see after I have been to Gallipoli on 26 April.

CASSIDY:

Prime Minister, thanks for your time this morning.

PRIME MINISTER:

You're very welcome.

[ends]