

HD DEFENCE MINISTER JOHNSTON DISCUSSES ABUSE CLAIMS IN DEFENCE AND OTHER ISSUES

WC 662 words

PD 9 June 2014

SN Australian Government News

SC HTAUGN

LA English

CY Copyright 2014. HT Media Limited. All rights reserved.

LP

Australia, June 9 -- Minister for Defence David Johnston issued the following transcript:

MARK COLVIN: The Defence Minister, David Johnston, will have lunch on a Japanese submarine this week as he visits the country for security talks.

TD

Senator Johnston is a fan of Japanese submarine technology and the two countries are edging closer to a deal, even though that might spark a reaction from **China**.

Japan's restrictive constitution limits its ability to sell its military technology to Australia, so the Minister doesn't want to be seen to be pushing his Japanese counterpart too hard.

But while he's away new concerns are being raised about the process for dealing with abuse claims in the military.

Tonight's Four Corners program includes victims expressing concerns that the perpetrators are not being dealt with.

Louise Yaxley's interview with the Minister begins with his talks with the Japanese.

DAVID JOHNSTON: We're simply working out together what we can do. But as I say I'm respectful that the pace is rather more set by the Japanese because of their constitutional situation.

LOUISE YAXLEY: How do you balance any deal that you potentially do with Japan with **China**'s feelings?

DAVID JOHNSTON: Well you see I'm from Western Australia, you know, **China** is a very substantial contemporary investor into Western Australia, we're producing **iron ore** for them, we're producing LNG, Liquid Natural Gas. They're actually taking **equity** in a lot of our **mining** companies here in Western Australia. And so I don't see the relationship as mutually exclusive.

LOUISE YAXLEY: Is **China**'s view a factor in deciding whether or not we go ahead with this or not though?

DAVID JOHNSTON: No, no, no, definitely not. We have a separate relationship with **China**. It's strong, very economically based.

LOUISE YAXLEY: So even if **China** sent a signal that it was really concerned about this it wouldn't matter?

DAVID JOHNSTON: Well we're - certainly we're conscious of the neighbourhood and what the neighbourhood thinks. And we would be certainly conscious and respectful of what **China** thought.

But this is our business, this is Australian sovereign domain. Our relationship with **China** is strong, it's very positive, and I think very friendly. And I think we can explain our disposition as to who we engage with and how we engage in, particularly East Asia, from a position of strength and very confidently.

LOUISE YAXLEY: While you're overseas in Japan there's further fallout from the allegations of rape and abuse in the military, with the Four Corners program. And insiders that have spoken to that program say a royal commission is the only way to get to the bottom of abuse at ADFA (Australia Defence Force Academy) in the early 1990s. What's your response?

DAVID JOHNSTON: Well firstly let me underline that the Government takes these allegations very, very seriously. But we are concerned about as a first priority is the victims. We don't want to drag the victims through some sort of process that makes them revisit the trauma that they've been through.

Now we've set up the DART, 2,400 claimants have come forward, more than \$20 **million** in reparation have been paid, 63 matters referred to civil police.

LOUISE YAXLEY: But how can you be confident as minister that the perpetrators are being dealt with?

DAVID JOHNSTON: You listen to what General Hurley has been saying, he is very interested in ensuring that the perpetrators are dealt with, are followed up, discovered. Very...

LOUISE YAXLEY: But what's the process for that?

*Rest of the document can be viewed at

(<http://www.minister.defence.gov.au/2014/06/09/minister-for-defence-interview-with-abc-pm-program/>)

CT For any query with respect to this article or any other content requirement, please contact Editor at htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

NS gpol : Domestic Politics | gcat : Political/General News | gpir : Politics/International Relations

RE china : China | austr : Australia | jap : Japan | wastr : Western Australia | apacz : Asia Pacific | asiaz : Asia | ausnz : Australia/Oceania | bric : BRIC Countries | chinaz : Greater China | devgcoz : Emerging Market Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | easiaz : Eastern Asia

PUB HT Media Limited

AN Document HTAUGN0020140611ea690001f