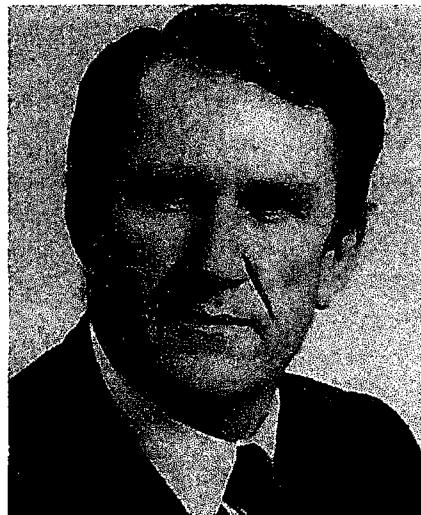


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AUSTRALIA**(John) Malcolm FRASER*****Prime Minister***

On 13 December 1975 the conservative Liberal-National Country Party coalition received the largest parliamentary majority in Australia's history. Installed as head of the new government was Malcolm Fraser, who since March 1975 has been leader of the Liberal Party (LP), the senior member of the coalition. As leader of the opposition, he had become caretaker Prime Minister on 11 November 1975, when Governor General Sir John Kerr sacked Labor Prime Minister Gough Whitlam after a lengthy parliamentary impasse over the budget. A strong conservative, Fraser stands well to the right of most members of his basically conservative party and is determined to move Australian politics in that direction.



(1975)

Economic Views—Reliance on Private Initiative

Fraser focused his 1975 campaign on the economy, emphasizing the Labor government's very real vulnerabilities—inflation and unemployment. A classic free enterprise man, he stressed the role of private business and promised to protect Australian industry by encouraging expansion of domestic production. He has pledged to slash government spending, restore to the states many of the powers assumed by the federal government, and give the average man greater "economic independence." Fraser has said that his government's top priority is controlling inflation, but both inflation and unemployment remain unsolved problems that threaten his government no less seriously than they did its predecessor.

Foreign Policy—Return to Conservatism

Foreign policy was not a major issue in the 1975 campaign, but Fraser made it clear that he intended some major changes, primarily to reverse the drift away from the Western alliance and concomitant overtures to Communist and Third World countries that had characterized the Labor government's international outlook. After the election he lost no time in conveying his basic foreign policy attitudes, and in June 1976 he made his first major speech to Parliament on that subject. Fraser strongly endorsed the alliance with the United States, although he cautioned that the Vietnam war

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and Watergate had undermined US self-confidence and that undue world criticism had produced "some concern about America's capacity to act with full effect around the world." He expressed the hope that "good working relations" with the People's Republic of China (PRC) would continue, and he demanded that the Soviet Union prove its commitment to world peace by restraining its military expansionism.

Fraser repeated his charges against the Soviets and his concerns about the ability of the United States to conduct foreign policy effectively during a visit to the PRC in June. The transcript of his conversation with PRC Premier Hua Kuo-feng, which also included some candid references to the actions of several other countries, was leaked to the press and caused the Prime Minister considerable embarrassment.

(b)(1) Fraser's strong anti-Soviet line has provoked some relatively restrained
(b)(3) protests [redacted] but the Australian public is apparently satisfied with the basic direction of his foreign policy statements.

The Prime Minister is unquestionably the dominant voice in Australia's foreign policy. He believes in facing fundamental policy issues squarely. [redacted]

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A Respected Leader

Fraser is one of the LP's brightest and most capable officials. His party selected him for the post of leader in the hope that he could provide the firm guidance and policy direction that his predecessor had not been able to give.



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Early Life and Career

John Malcolm Fraser was born in Melbourne on 21 May 1930. He is the son of a wealthy grazier (gentleman farmer) and the grandson of a Scotsman who came to Australia from Nova Scotia during the 19th century gold rush and eventually became a member of the Victorian Legislative Council and the first Commonwealth Parliament. Educated at the prestigious Melbourne Grammar School, Malcolm Fraser received a master's degree in philosophy, political science and economics from Magdalen College of Oxford University in 1952.

After finishing school, Fraser returned to the family ranch and began thinking about a political career. He lost his first bid for election to the House



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of Representatives in 1953 but was successful in 1955. He has been reelected ever since as a representative of Wannon, Victoria, a rural constituency devoted primarily to raising cattle, grain and sheep. During the early 1960's Fraser served as chairman of the Government Members' Defense Committee and as a member of the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs (1962-66) and the Council of Australian National University (1964-66).

In recent years Fraser has revealed that, after spending 10 years in Parliament waiting in vain for a Cabinet assignment, he was on the verge of abandoning politics. He was spared that decision when the late Harold Holt became Prime Minister and appointed him Minister for the Army in January 1966. The youngest member of Holt's Cabinet, Fraser handled his duties well



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After Holt's death, John Gorton became Prime Minister in January 1968, and in February he appointed Fraser Minister for Education and Science. Fraser again scored an impressive record in handling those responsibilities. Gorton transferred him to the post of Minister for Defense in November 1969.

Party Feuds

Fraser, who was one of the three LP members who promoted Gorton's candidacy for party leadership in 1968, was initially one of Gorton's strongest supporters. By early 1971, however, rumors of growing discord between the two men were confirmed when it was revealed that each had leaked to the press embarrassing information about the other. The controversy involved alleged army dissatisfaction with Fraser's leadership and Gorton's refusal to back his Defense Minister in public. Fraser resigned on 7 March 1971. Two days later he launched a bitter attack on Gorton in Parliament, charging that the Prime Minister was disloyal to his Cabinet and unfit to hold office. At an emergency meeting of the Federal Parliamentary LP, Gorton failed to win a vote of confidence, and William McMahon was elected party leader, thus succeeding Gorton as Prime Minister.



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The new Prime Minister did not include Fraser in his first Cabinet, but in August 1971, after Fraser had come in third in the voting for deputy LP leader, McMahon appointed him Minister for Education and Science. Fraser held that post until the Labor government took office in December 1972.

Positions in the Opposition

Fraser was elected to the LP Federal Executive in January 1973. At that time he was also chosen to serve as Shadow Minister for Primary Industry;



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[Redacted]

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after a reorganization in August 1973 he was designated as Shadow Minister for Labor, a post he held until he became party leader.

[Redacted]

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Travel

Fraser first visited the United States on a 60-day Foreign Leader Grant in 1964. He returned in 1970 as Minister for Defense to confer with then Secretary of State William Rogers and Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird. As Prime Minister, he made an official visit to Washington in July 1976. Since taking office he has also visited Malaysia and Singapore (January 1976); New Zealand (March); the PRC, Japan and the Philippines (June); and Indonesia (October).

Personal Data

[Redacted]

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A wealthy man, Fraser drives a Mercedes and maintains a house in one of Canberra's fashionable districts as well as an 8,000-acre estate in Victoria, where he raises cattle and sheep. He lists his leisure interests as fishing and photography, but he can be roused to real enthusiasm when talking about his motorcycle.

In 1956 Fraser married Tamara Beggs [Redacted]

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They have four children: Mark, 18; Angela, 17; Hugh, 14; and Phoebe, 10.

[Redacted]

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CIA/DDI/CRS

[Redacted]

4 October 1976

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(b)(6)

[Redacted]

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