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PRIME MINISTER

FOR PRESS

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Malcolm Fraser

CONDOLENCE - MAO TSE-TUNG

Mao Tse-Tung, Chairman of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, died on 9 September. He was the principal architect of China since 1949 and one of the very few men who have had a major impact on the course of world history.

He led the Chinese Communist Party through a long and destructive civil war and in his writings set out a new conception of what China could be. Mao Tse-Tung devoted his life to the vision of a rigorously egalitarian society, and in pursuit of that vision he mobilized the vast energies of the Chinese people.

For the first time in many decades Mao Tse-Tung gave China an effective administration, restored a country ravaged by civil war, and secured the basic necessities of life to China's people. He sought for China self-reliance. Under his leadership China assumed a major role in world affairs.

Mao Tse-Tung's conception of the desirable organisation of a society was not ours. But he achieved peace internally and respect for China. He came to symbolise the new China for his own people and for the world.

In recent years under Mao Tse-Tung's leadership, China began to adjust her ideological objectives to the realities of world power. His meeting in 1972 with the President of the United States was a significant and deliberate step in this process. For Australians, it is of considerable significance that, as China's supreme leader, he lent his personal authority to the establishment and further development of China's relations with Australia. In the closing years of his life, important steps were taken in the improvement of friendship and mutual understanding between China and Australia.

The loss of Mao Tse-Tung will be deeply mourned by the Chinese people. I have publicly expressed, on behalf of the Australian people, my sympathy for their loss, and was first to sign the Book of Condolence in Canberra. The Australian Ambassador in Peking has laid wreaths as a formal act of condolence. I am sure this House would wish to place on record its sympathy for the Chinese people in their loss.

I therefore move that this House record its sincere regret at the death of Chairman Mao-Tse-Tung, expresses to the people of China profound regret and tenders its deep sympathy to his family in their bereavement.

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