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FILE	SUBJ.
DATE	SUB-CAT

AUG. 1988

FBIS-EAS-88-160
18 August 1988

Australia

Hayden Named Next Governor General

*BK1708094288 Hong Kong AFP in English 0915 GMT
17 Aug 88*

[Text] Canberra, Aug 17 (AFP)—Australian Foreign Minister Bill Hayden has resigned from the government to become the country's next governor general, Prime Minister Bob Hawke said here Wednesday [17 August].

Mr. Hawke said in a statement that Britain's Queen Elizabeth II had announced in London Mr. Hayden's appointment as her constitutional representative.

The prime minister said Mr. Hayden had resigned his position as foreign affairs and trade minister.

In a separate statement, Mr. Hayden said he had resigned from the ruling Labor Party and from the seat he had held in the national Parliament for 27 years.

Mr. Hayden, 55, a former Queensland policeman, will take up the vice-regal position February 16 on the retirement of incumbent Sir Ninian Stephen.

As governor general, the Australian Constitution gives Mr. Hayden executive authority with power to remove the government.

Mr. Hayden was a minister in the Labor government of Gough Whitlam which was dismissed by the then governor general Sir John Kerr in 1975.

In the past, Mr. Hayden has made clear his belief that the role of the Australian governor general is ceremonial.

Mr. Hawke welcomed the appointment and said Mr. Hayden's political career had been one of great distinction.

Trade Negotiations Minister Michael Duffy will act as foreign affairs and trade minister until a cabinet reshuffle at the end of the month, Mr. Hawke said.

Mr. Hayden served as social security minister and as treasurer in the Whitlam government, leader of the opposition from 1977 to 1983, and as foreign minister since the election of the Hawke government in 1983.