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Attention: Jim Coulter / Chris Mayor [Please copy and
send to any friends who would be wanting news. Pl could you send
a copy to John Williams. Thankyou.]

Fax from: Alan/Nigel/Mohan Fax Number

July 31st 1990
On Board the HMNZS ENDEAVOUR

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We are into the third day of talks and you may have heard some
reports on the radio or TV. But there is a lot more to say. We'll
try to give you some of the amazing events that led to the three
of us being here.

At one and a half hours notice on Friday afternoon (27th July)
when we were in Bernard's office we were told "be at the airport
by 2pm." We made it! ABC correspondent Sean Dorney was on the
flight and sat next to Alan and Mohan. The rapport was immediate
and our discussion most informative. We overnighted at the
Travelodge in Rabaul. In the morning Sam Piniau and Gaius Meli
came over and spent two hours with us. It was very good to get
their perspectives on the country. They first asked why we had
been asked to go and not "one of us Papua New Guineans." It gave
us an opportunity to explain. We left with their full support and
blessings.

The official PNG delegation joined us in Rabaul on Saturday
afternoon. "The Chief" (Sir Michael Somare) had returned from
overseas and had one night in Moresby. We had an opportunity to
pray and share guidance with Bernard. The Chief welcomed us with
great warmth. Bernard told us that there had been full support
for our participation from all those connected with the
arrangements for these talks. It was a great trust, and we were
overwhelmed by the regard and confidence placed in us. We felt a
sense of gratitude to God for all that had gone before to bring us
to where we were.

We were speechless as we boarded the frigate WELLINGTON at the
Rabaul wharf, with all the Officers attired in their smart
uniforms standing to attention, and the Maoris in the crew doing a
Haka as a welcome. The crew of the ship couldn't be more helpful.
We were shown into our bunks, kindly vacated by officers and
sailors.

After dinner we all met together, in a small lounge provided for
our use. The ABC and NZ radio correspondents and Post Courier
journalist were also there. The Secretary of the Prime Minister's
Department, Paul Bengo led the meeting. He said that the
delegation faced one of the biggest tasks in the next days and
"only with God's help can we find a breakthrough." Bernard
followed with similar thoughts and took the opportunity to tell
everyone why we were there - "to provide the spiritual content
that will be needed throughout the talks." We three were given
the opportunity to say what had brought us together to PNG at this
time. The Chief then took over and also welcomed us officially.

All this helped to establish our role. He then said he had read Hebrews chapter 8. Alan who had followed a thought to bring his pocket bible, opened it and Mohan read the verses. The Chief then prayed for all of us and for all those coming from Bougainville and ended with the Prayer of Saint Francis.

We settled into our bunks for our first night at sea marvelling at all we had been through that evening and the days before! Where else in the world would a team of negotiators arrive at a meeting in such a spirit of forgiveness and understanding, when there has been cause for so much hurt, bitterness and blame on both sides. We were lulled to sleep as the ship steamed towards Bougainville in great weather and calm seas. We were soon to become able seamen!

Each day we are transported three at a time from the WELLINGTON by Navy helicopter (Wasps) to the ENDEAVOUR where the talks are being held. It is a very fine ship and we have meeting, office and communication facilities on board.

On the first day the sessions began with an ecumenical Church service led by the ship's Chaplain. Prayers and readings were shared by members of both groups. It was Bernard's thought to begin in this way. Later we met some of the Bougainville delegation out on deck. When Alan introduced himself to Joe Kabui leader of the delegation (formerly Premier) he responded with enthusiasm saying, "So you are Alan Weeks!" He remembered the letter from the Sydney conference and other communications since. This had meant a lot to him. He then spoke to the others around him saying who we were and acknowledged that MRA had played an important part in Bougainville in the past. "We are so glad you are here", he said. This was very reassuring to us.

We have felt not to attend the official sessions but to play a part behind the scenes. Last morning the Bougainville delegation asked us into their meeting room and we were able to tell them why we were here and answer questions. After this we were asked to come and have lunch with them. They had brought food prepared in Bougainville. "We do not want to eat the good food on the ship while our people are still suffering," they said.

We have had many talks with individuals over these days. To be confined on a ship gives great advantages, you cannot get too far away from people!

In the evenings we sit on deck with the Chief, Bernard and others, watching the sun go down over the blue Pacific Ocean, eagerly listening to Radio Australia. (With Sean Dorney wondering how his report is going to come over!) As our ship charts its daily course through the coral reefs and out to sea, we pray that through these next days God will guide those who will determine the course this nation will take.

Thankyou for all your support and prayers.

Yours sincerely,

Alan *Nigel* *Mohan*

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Message from Mohan to Nivanka: As of now I am still keeping my original travel schedule. So, unless you hear from me, I'll be in Melbourne on 5th August!