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WARNING: TOPIC: DOMESTIC POLITICAL, INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL, HUMAN RIGHTS, LEADER

SERIAL: SEP20020807000078

COUNTRY: AUSTRALIA, UNITED STATES, AFGHANISTAN

SUBJ: AUSTRALIAN PM DEFENDS "CORRECT" US DETENTION OF ALLEGED TALEBAN FIGHTER

SOURCE: MELBOURNE RADIO AUSTRALIA IN ENGLISH 0300 GMT 7 AUG 02

TEXT:

[FBIS TRANSCRIBED TEXT] AUSTRALIAN PM DEFENDS "CORRECT" US DETENTION OF ALLEGED TALEBAN FIGHTER

TEXT OF REPORT BY RADIO AUSTRALIA ON 7 AUGUST

AUSTRALIA'S PRIME MINISTER, JOHN HOWARD, HAS TOLD THE FATHER OF A SUSPECTED AUSTRALIAN TALEBAN FIGHTER THE UNITED STATES IS JUSTIFIED IN DETAINING HIS SON.

DAVID HICKS WAS CAPTURED IN AFGHANISTAN SEVEN MONTHS AGO. HE REMAINS AT GUANTANAMO BAY IN CUBA AFTER LOSING A LEGAL BATTLE TO BE TRIED IN THE US. TODAY TERRY HICKS RAISED HIS SON'S SITUATION WITH MR HOWARD ON RADIO IN THE CITY OF ADELAIDE BUT THE PRIME MINISTER HAS DEFENDED AMERICA'S HANDLING OF THE CASE.

[HOWARD] YOU MUST UNDERSTAND THAT HE WAS TAKEN INTO CUSTODY DURING A MILITARY OPERATION, AND A MILITARY OPERATION WHICH WE SUPPORTED, A MILITARY OPERATION THAT WE BELIEVE WAS TOTALLY JUSTIFIED, AND WE ARE SATISFIED THAT ACCORDING TO THE LAWS OF WAR WHAT THE AMERICANS DID WAS CORRECT.

[DESCRIPTION OF SOURCE: MELBOURNE RADIO AUSTRALIA IN ENGLISH -- GOVERNMENT-FUNDED OVERSEAS SERVICE OF THE AUSTRALIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION]

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