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ED HENALD



NO NONSENSE ... French navy commandos board a yacht carrying an international group of anti-nuclear protesters inside the exclusion zone around Mururoa Atoll. The party has since been released.

Picture: AP

'No nukes' internationals set free in Tahiti

PAPEETE — International politicians detained after they sailed into the security zone around France's nuclear test site at Mururoa Atoll yesterday, vowed to continue protests in the area.

The eight MPs — from Luxembourg, Japan, Italy, Australia and Sweden — were freed yesterday and flown back to the Tahitian capital, a day after they sailed into the exclusion zone on a 12-metre yacht.

Meanwhile, the authorities in Papeete continued their clampdown after the riots sparked by the nuclear test last week.

Foreign TV crews have been asked to hand film to police, and 15 aides to arrested trade union leader Hiro Tefaarere, have been detained.

Some Australian TV crews, including Channel Nine, turned over videotapes only under protest after they were served with

a court order demanding their compliance.

Accusations by French President Jacques Chirac that Australia and New Zealand wanted to force France out of the Pacific were called "ridiculous and unsustainable" yesterday by Australia's Prime Minister Paul Keating.

Mr Chirac, interviewed in Paris said: "What Australians and New Zealanders can't stand is that we are in the Pacific. What they want is France out so they can be left in peace."

On Mr Chirac's threat, made in the interview, to stop buying Australian uranium in retaliation, Mr Keating said there was no point in the countries engaging in "a commercial spat".

France found itself fur-

ther blackened yesterday when the authoritative French daily newspaper Le Monde, published a story claiming that French secret agents had wanted to inject Greenpeace anti-nuclear militants with a virus to stop them sailing to the South Pacific.

The virus project targeted the crew of the MV Greenpeace when it was docked in the Dutch West Indies in 1985.

Le Monde said the project was dropped in favour of electronic jamming of Greenpeace communications once they reached France's nuclear test site.

Agents bribed officials to delay delivery of the ship's communication equipment, enabling France to study it and later hamper transmissions. — Sapa-Reuter-AP