

Administration of Barack H. Obama, 2010

Remarks Following a Meeting With Prime Minister Julia E. Gillard of Australia in Yokohama, Japan

November 13, 2010

President Obama. Well, let me just say very briefly, I've had a chance to speak previously with Prime Minister Gillard on the phone. It is a wonderful opportunity for me to meet her during the course of both the G-20 and now in our first face-to-face meeting. The United States does not have a closer or better ally than Australia. We are grateful for all the work that we do together.

I expressed my personal thanks to the people of Australia through the Prime Minister for the enormous sacrifices that are being made in Afghanistan by Australian troops. We, I think, are going to be discussing these issues further when we see each other at the Lisbon summit. But obviously, all of us have an interest in bringing about a good outcome in that region that ensures our safety and security over the long term.

On the economic front, I reiterated to the Prime Minister how important the Asia-Pacific region is to our economy and to world economic growth. Australia is a central player in that economy. And so we are going to continue to explore ways that we can work together to expand trade, expand investment, ensure that everybody is playing by the rules of the road in the region and cooperating effectively. The Trans-Pacific Partnership is a good example of the kind of collaboration between our two countries that, I think, can expand opportunity for all peoples.

So I am just grateful to have this opportunity to speak with the Prime Minister. I've extended an invitation to her to visit the United States sometime early next year, and we'll find a date, and hopefully, we can build on some of the discussions that we've already had to further enhance our bilateral cooperation.

So, Prime Minister, thank you and to your entire delegation for the good work that you've done. And I look forward to seeing you in Washington.

Prime Minister Gillard. Thank you. And I have to say to President Obama, we've had the opportunity to be at the G-20 over the last few days and had the opportunity for a few brief discussions there, and we will see each other in Lisbon next weekend. Our two countries are great mates, to use our terminology, and as great mates, we are continuing to work together in our region and beyond.

We have had the opportunity to talk about Afghanistan, and I do want to take this opportunity to pass on the condolences of the Australian people for the losses that you have suffered there. But we are working together there and will have time next weekend at Lisbon to talk about the transition strategy.

We've also had the opportunity to reflect on the discussions we had at AUSMIN about the American force posture review and the work that we are doing on new challenges like cybersecurity. And we've had the opportunity to talk about our engagement in the region, where the U.S. engagement is strengthening through forums like the East Asia summit.

And we are on the same page on trade, so we very much look forward to the discussions of the Trans-Pacific Partnership during the course of the APEC meetings.

So a very good opportunity to have a good discussion about the areas where our two countries are collaborating now and for the future. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:20 p.m. at the InterContinental Yokohama Grand hotel. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Categories: Meetings With Foreign Leaders and International Officials : Australia, Prime Minister Gillard.

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