

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2023

Remarks at a Welcoming Ceremony for Prime Minister Anthony Albanese of Australia

October 25, 2023

President Biden. Well, Mr. Prime Minister and Jodie, distinguished guests, and all of Australia out on the lawn—[*laughter*—welcome. Welcome and good morning—or, as you would say, g'day.

You know, it's an honor to welcome you all to the White House as we celebrate the enduring alliance between Australia and the United States, an alliance that's marked by imagination, ingenuity, and innovation.

Nearly 55 years ago, American astronauts took humanity's first step on the Moon. They sent a message, forever etched in history, quote, "That's one small step for man, [and] one giant step [leap; White House correction] for mankind."

But the only reason anyone down on Earth saw this feat or heard those immortal words was thanks to a team of Australian engineers. As dawn broke at NASA station, just outside of Canberra, they aimed a radio telescope toward the heavens, captured a lone note—lone voice among all the stars, and shared it with millions of people watching breathlessly all around the world.

Ladies and gentlemen, Mr. Prime Minister, today, Australia and the United States continue to stand together, continue to innovate, to push past [past; White House correction] the bounds that had been in our way, and make a giant step toward what could be, to race undaunted toward a future we know is possible if—if—we work together.

Because time and time again, we've seen what America and Australia can do when we stand as one.

We saw it during World War I, when our troops helped turn the tide of war on the Western Front. We saw it during World War II, when we fought the forces of fascism, side by side in the Pacific, cementing a mateship between our people. And we saw it again during the war against terror, when Australia invoked the ANZUS Treaty for the first time to stand with the United States after we were attacked on 9/11.

And we'll never forget those brave Australians and Americans who, generation after generation, gave their lives to give us a better world. We'll never forget our obligation to them to keep upholding the democratic values for which they gave their lives, to keep forging a better future for generations to come.

Together, Australia and America are meeting that obligation. As two proud Pacific nations, we're ensuring the Indo-Pacific remains free, open, and prosperous and secure, including through our historic AUKUS partnership with the United Kingdom. We're building stronger economies, economies where no one fears coercion and everyone, as you say Down Under, gets a fair go.

Together, we're standing with Israel against Hamas's terrorism. We're standing with Ukraine against Putin's tyranny. And we're providing and—proving that democracy can deliver on the challenges that matter most to people's lives, from climate change to cancer.

And today, we're fueling the spark of innovation that has long burned in the hearts of Aussies and Americans. Innovation that will help uplift people in Indo-Pacific and all around the world. Innovation that took us to the Moon and will take us further in the years ahead.

Mr. Prime Minister, the alliance between Australia and the United States has never been more important than it is today. And we have never been more committed than we are today.

Australia and America stand ready. Ready to do the hard work, the historic work, to tackle the challenges we face. Ready to take a giant leap together toward a better future, one of greater opportunity, dignity, security, and liberty for Americans, for Australians, for all.

May God bless our alliance, and may God protect our troops.

And now it's my great honor to introduce Prime Minister Albanese, and I'm honored to invite you to say a few words. Thank you.

Prime Minister Albanese. President Biden, First Lady Dr. Biden, firstly, thank you for the great honor of this invitation and the wonderful warmth of your welcome, including the wonderful dinner we had in the White House last night.

Mr. President, when you and I stood together in San Diego in March, the USS *Sterett* and the USS *Missouri* behind us, we were surrounded by the examples of America's power. To stand with you here in Washington, DC, is to witness the power of America's example: the ideas and ideals that your great democracy was built on.

The self-evident truths that every American generation strives to give deeper meaning and the peace and freedom that America seeks to defend around the globe. The principle that every country, large and small, should be able to seek to shape its own destiny and secure its own future, where the sovereignty of every nation is respected and the dignity and liberty of every individual is recognized. Where peace is secured not by fear of force or strength of arms alone, but through the collective commitment and the shared responsibility of the international community.

This is at the heart of our alliance, the soul of our partnership: not a pact against a common enemy, a pledge to a common cause; a shared belief that freedom, peace, and equality are not just American ideals or Australian values, they belong to all humankind.

That is why Ukrainian soldiers are driving Australia-made Bushmasters as they drive back an illegal and immoral invasion. And it is why all Australians condemn the atrocities, terror, and pitiless brutality of Hamas.

And, Mr. President, we applaud the personal resolve you have brought to this troubled part of the world. You have spoken with moral clarity. And you have stood up for a simple principle: the principle that every innocent life matters—Israeli and Palestinian—and that in every conflict, every effort must be made to protect civilians.

American leadership is indispensable, but it is not inevitable. It takes a leader to deliver it. It takes wisdom to show empathy, courage to provide humanitarian assistance, and true leadership to seek peace. Because protecting innocent people is not a show of weakness, it is a measure of strength.

Mr. President, our nations' steadfast alliance has grown and thrived through 15 of my predecessors and 13 of yours. In Australian public life, it meets the number-one measure of a great idea: Both political parties try and claim credit for it. *[Laughter]* But it is not and it has never been the leaders at this podium who determine the strength and success of our alliance. It is the people we serve.

Presidents and Prime Ministers can praise our countries' shared values. We can sign agreements to advance our common interests. But it is our citizens who make the words a bond. It is our people whose courage and ambition, hard work and aspiration give life and weight to all we share and all we strive for.

Sometimes, we casually refer to "average Americans" or "everyday Australians," but what they do every day is anything but average. It is our people making the breakthroughs that are seeing Australia and the United States cooperate in new technology like never before, from quantum computing and medical science, to agriculture and defense. It's our people driving unprecedented collaboration in our creative industries, in art and film and music, from "Barbie" to "Bluey." [Laughter]

It is our people partnering to unlock the possibilities of clean energy and critical minerals. The third pillar—the new pillar—of our alliance: a plan for both our nations to seize the transformative economic opportunities of clean energy and a plan to help every nation meet the global challenge of climate change.

It is our people who will train together, side by side, to service the next generation of our submarines and defense technology. And it is our people that we honor when we remember the generations of Australians and Americans who have fought and fallen together, our veterans and all those who have given the cause of peace their last full measure of devotion.

And, Mr. President, in reflecting on this century of service, I'm reminded of a sentiment that you have shared before from an American soldier talking about his time in Iraq. And that sentiment was this, "You know when there's an Australian with you, they'll always have your back." A generous thought from a man of courage and character, Major Beau Biden.

Mr. President, you have known far more than life's ordinary share of loss and grief, and you have been called to serve at a time when sadness and strife have cast a long shadow on our world. You understand that the task for all of us is to draw on the strength that hope instills, to look to the future not just with optimism for better days, but with the determination to build a better world.

And while we do indeed face testing times, our friendship is tried and tested. Our people are up for the challenge. Our alliance has been shaped by history, and it is ready to shape the future. So, with optimism and with determination, let us pledge to make this is a time when "hope and history rhyme."

Let us write the next chapter in our alliance together.

I thank you, Mr. President.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:25 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House, where Prime Minister Albanese was accorded a formal welcome with full military honors. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Albanese's partner Jodie Haydon; former National Aeronautics and Space Administration astronaut Edwin E. "Buzz" Aldrin, Jr.; and President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 26.

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