

Remarks at a Dinner Hosted by Prime Minister Keating of Australia in Canberra

January 2, 1992

This is an impossible situation, following two such articulate, young, and vibrant leaders of this country. But first, let me simply say thank you to the Prime Minister for his hospitality and to all of you for making Barbara and me feel so very much at home.

It feels odd to hear myself referred to as the leader of the free world. I told Barbara, somebody in Sydney said I was the leader of the free world. She says, "Hurry up and get out of the bathroom; we're late. Run." [Laughter]

I won't try to put you in what we call double jeopardy. You heard me over there, here next door in this beautiful building. And I'm also reminded of two sayings. One in our Congress is, "The speech you don't give is the one that helps you get re-elected." [Laughter] And I'm about to be running, I think, for President. And secondly, I love the one about the kid that went to church with his grandfather, and he said, "Granddad, what are all the flags along the side of the church for?" The grandfather said, "Well, that, son, is for those who died in service." And the kid said, "Oh, really? The 9 o'clock or the 11 o'clock service?" [Laughter] And I'm reminded that I went on for about 25 minutes today, so you don't need another full load.

I was reminded of something, though, today perhaps of some significance, international significance, that it is likely that I will be the last President of the United States who served in the World War II. And I heard very generous assessments by the Prime Minister and by the leader of the opposition about my service. And yes, I was shot down off the shores of Chichi-Jima. And I had only wished that I had met Dawn Fraser before because I tried to set the record for swimming away from the island. And if I'd known her I might have done a better job of it—[laughter]—and not been so scared.

But anyway, why, I think of the Coral Sea experience and what it means to the United States and, of course, what it means

to Australia. And I think back to my own little history: I was 17, about to reach my 18th birthday a month later, when the Battle of the Coral Sea took place. And I think those of us in that vintage, and there are not many in the room I'm pleased to say, but those of us in that vintage will always remember that and therefore will always have this very special feeling about Australia.

But one of the things that interests me on this visit is hearing some educators talking about the need to be sure that the younger generations remember this, not necessarily the smoke and the gunfire and all of that, but the significance of these two great countries standing together. And this visit for us has simply reminded me, and then I think through me as President, the American people, of the importance of this relationship. It is clear. It is unambiguous. There is great friendship.

And yes, we have some differences. And we faced up to them. They thrust me into the arena with three of the biggest farmers I've ever seen in my life. [Laughter] I won't single them out, but when I shook hands with one I made the mistake of giving him that kind of political embrace when you put your hand on his arm; it's all muscle, sheer iron. And I said, "I'd better listen to what this guy has to say." [Laughter]

And so, it's been a good, frank visit. We haven't held back. We discussed our differences. But I think they have been overwhelmed by the common interests that the United States and Australia have.

So, it has been for us an enormous privilege. We'll never forget it on a personal basis. And I happen to believe that it will simply reinforce this feeling of friendship and alliance and strength that is indeed the relationship between Australia and the United States of America.

So, thank you from a grateful heart for a fantastic visit.

Note: The President spoke at 9:32 p.m. in the House of Representatives Chamber at Parliament House. In his remarks, he referred to Olympic gold medalist Dawn Fraser. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks to Business and Community Leaders in Melbourne January 3, 1992

Premier, thank you for that wonderfully warm introduction; and to all of the people of Victoria, this wonderful city, for the warmth of your reception. I'd like to salute the Deputy Premier, Jim Kennan, and his wife, Janet; Governor McCaughey and his wife, Jean; our Ambassador, Mel Sembler, and his wife, Betty. I'd like to single out and identify, for those of you who have not met him, our very able Secretary of Commerce who's traveling with me on this trip, Secretary Bob Mosbacher, over here; and thank our hosts for a wonderful day here, two of whom I think are also with us at this luncheon, Dick Warburton, who's president of the American Chamber of Commerce, and Brian Loton, the president of the Business Council of Australia.

Australia's national anthem speaks of a land abounding in nature's gifts, of beauty rich and rare. Well, Barbara and I feel richer for the rare privilege of being with you today. And Joan, tell your friend that the only button that I have my finger on these days is the one where I try to set the clock on my VCR. *[Laughter]* And I hope it always stays that way.

And I'm also glad to visit this country where much of your beautiful land is known as bush country. *[Laughter]* And now, if I can just get that description to apply to 50 States back home, all will be well. *[Laughter]*

Ten years ago this May, I first visited Australia to mark the 40th anniversary of the Battle of Coral Sea. And since then, we have toiled together to advance what I call the hard work of freedom. I'm here to talk of how Australia and America can use that work to help build a better world. And we will build it through liberty and opportunity and through trade that is both free and fair. And we will build it by using our common

culture and principles to promote prosperity at home and democracy abroad, especially the jobs and economic growth that is my highest priority.

This morning, Barbara and I visited the Australian War Memorial, where our alliance reminded me of General Patton's words: "Wars may be fought with weapons, but they are won by men." The memorial stirs the memory of heroes who stood with our troops in combat, heroes who fought together to defend our common ideals. And our task now is to join together to create a world where the force of law outlasts the use of force.

The successful end of the cold war brings the promise of a world of peace and dignity. Its triumph is inevitable, but only if democracies are resolute. Globally, Australia has encouraged this concept by supporting a more engaged United Nations. And regionally, you helped shape the framework for the Cambodian peace settlement agreed to by warring factions. And I assure you, here too, we, America, are your partners. We will not abandon the special responsibility we have to help further stability in this region.

More than 150 years ago, President Andrew Jackson appointed J.H. Williams as the first American consul here. Arriving from Boston, Williams was greeted by a newspaper article. "We welcome his arrival," read the Australian paper, "as a pledge of increasing intimacy between the two countries from which mutual advantages may be expected to flow." One hundred and fifty years ago.

In the Persian Gulf conflict, those advantages served the cause of peace. And you were quick to condemn the Iraqi invasion, to endorse economic sanctions, to send ships to participate in the multinational coa-