

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Prime Minister Malcolm B. Turnbull of Australia January 19, 2016

President Obama. Well, it is a great pleasure to welcome Prime Minister Turnbull and his delegation to the Oval Office. We had the opportunity to work together at the G-20 summit in Turkey and then had our first bilateral meeting in Manila during the APEC and ASEAN events. And I emphasized to the Prime Minister at that time and want to reiterate the extraordinary gratitude that the American people have for the strong and steadfast alliance between our two countries.

I've said before that the friendship between the United States and Australia is not only based on common economic and geopolitical interests, but it's also based on an extraordinary affinity and shared values. There are probably—there are very few countries that have as much in common as the United States and Australia does, and I want to thank all the people of Australia for the extraordinary hospitality and graciousness that they've shown me every time that I've had a chance to visit your wonderful country. I'm glad to be able to reciprocate. I will note, it is a little bit colder here—[laughter]—than it was down under.

Malcolm has had an opportunity to travel to some key hotspots over the last several days, including Afghanistan and Iraq. And those are just two places where we see the value of Australia's Armed Forces and the remarkable contribution that they have made and the sacrifices that they make consistently.

Keep in mind that in our fight against ISIL, Australia is the second largest contributor of troops on the ground after the United States. They have been a consistent and extraordinarily effective member of the coalition that has helped to deliver an opportunity for the Afghan people to govern themselves and to build up their security forces. And so I'm very much looking forward to hearing from Malcolm his impressions about how we can continue to focus on what we call the parent tumor of ISIL in Iraq and Syria and the important work that

we have to do together on countering violent extremism generally.

We note the recent attack in Jakarta that appears to have been ISIL-inspired, and it's a reminder that Southeast Asia has generally done a very effective job fighting against extremism, but it is an area that we have to pay attention to and watch. And obviously, Australia has been impacted in the past by such terrorist attacks. So we're going to talk about how we can strengthen our cooperation, both in Syria and Iraq, the state of affairs in Afghanistan, but also countering violent extremism globally. And Australia will be a very important partner in that process.

We'll also have a chance to talk about the Asia-Pacific region, where we have common interests across the board. Our rebalance has been effective in part because we have such strong treaty alliances, and Australia is one of those critical alliances. And our Marines in Australia, the joint exercises that we do, the work that we do to affirm an international order and rules of the road with respect to issues like maritime law all are critical for the continued expansion of commerce and the sustained, peaceful conditions that allow our economies to thrive.

And finally, we'll have a chance to talk about TPP. We are both the—part of the driving force that created this rules-based system that is now being prepared to ratify among the various nations. It is going to be good for our economy. It is going to be good for our workers and our businesses. And it reaffirms that in order for us to thrive in the 21st century—particularly economies that are respectful of rule of law and concerned about labor rights and environmental rights—it's important for us to be making the rules in this region, and that's exactly what TPP does.

And I know that the Prime Minister has an agenda to spur additional innovation and investment in science and technology in Australia, which in this economy is going to be vital

for any economy to succeed. So I'll be interested to hear his plans and maybe offer my thoughts about the work that we're doing to continue to make sure that our economy is a dynamic, knowledge-based economy.

So I am grateful for our friendship, grateful for the work that we do together, very grateful for the sacrifices that have been made by Australian troops around the world, working side by side with our outstanding men and women in uniform. And I look forward to a very productive meeting.

Prime Minister Turnbull. Thank you. Thank you very much, Barack. You've been very hospitable and generous in inviting me to Washington this month. And your agencies have been very open.

We've had very productive discussions with the Defense Secretary, Ash Carter. Together, we went to Arlington and paid our respects to the—on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and recalled the comradeship, over a hundred years, of Australians and Americans fighting side by side in freedom's cause.

You're quite right, our alliance, our relationship is founded not just on national self-interest, not just on economics or kinship, but on shared values. We define our national identities by reference to common political values of freedom, the rule of law, democracy—real democracy, which empowers the majority, but constrains them so as to protect the minority. So we have those strong values in common.

And as you've said, just over the last few days, I've been in Baghdad and Kabul meeting our servicemen and meeting many of your service leaders there as well. And I've learned firsthand from our people and yours and, indeed, from the Government of Iraq, from its Prime Minister, how Australians and Americans working together were able to support the Iraqi security forces in the retaking of Ramadi, which has been an absolute adrenaline shot of confidence for that Government, a very, very significant result. And it was a great combination of our servicemen and women working with the Iraqis to achieve that.

In Kabul, I met with our soldiers who are training the Afghan National Army, their next

generation of leaders, building capacity so that they can secure and hold their own country. And once again, we're doing that in partnership. So it is a very strong—very, very strong partnership.

We've had very good discussions with your intelligence community too. That is especially important in the battle against violent extremists. We have to constantly lift our game in the way we engage with and tackle these extremists—particularly ISIL, but there are many others—as they operate in the cybersphere. Archaic and barbaric though they may be, their use regrettably of the Internet is very sophisticated. And so I'm pleased that we're going to be working on even closer collaboration there.

Barack, you mentioned the TPP. And can I say, as I've just said to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, encouraging them to encourage their Congressmen and Senators to support it, that the TPP is much more than a trade deal. The prosperity of the world, the security of the world has been founded on the peace and order in the Asia-Pacific, where—which has been delivered underwritten by the United States and its allies, including Australia.

And what we've been able to do there is deliver a period of peace—a long period of peace—from which everybody has benefited. And America's case—its proposition—is more than simply security. It is standing up for, as you said, the rules-based international order, an order where might is not right, where the law must prevail, where there is real transparency, where people can invest with confidence.

And the TPP is lifting those standards. And so it is much more than a trade deal. And I think when people try to analyze it in terms of what it adds to this amount of GDP or that, that's important. But the critical thing is the way it promotes the continued integration of those economies, because that is as important an element in our security in the maintenance of the values which both our countries share as all of our other efforts, whether they are in defense or whether they are in traditional diplomacy.

So right across the board, Mr. President, we have so much in common. And I congratu-

late you, finally, on the completion of the arrangements with Iran over their nuclear program. That has been—that was a formidable effort, a great example of leadership on the part of the United States. And I see the—I think there is, in that very difficult part of the world, which we will discuss shortly in much more detail—that is going to be an important step forward in ensuring the stability of that region.

So we have a lot to discuss. I thank you very much for your hospitality, for your generosity, and the way in which—typical of the relations between Australians and Americans—we have

been able to speak candidly at all levels of your Government, in a common cause, because the values we share are the values not just for these times, but for all time.

Thank you very much.

President Obama. Thank you. Thank you, Malcolm. Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:21 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization. Prime Minister Turnbull referred to Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi of Iraq.

Message to the Senate Returning Without Approval Legislation Regarding Congressional Disapproval of an Army Corps of Engineers and Environmental Protection Agency Rule on the Definition of “Waters of the United States” Under the Clean Water Act

January 19, 2016

To the Senate of the United States:

I am returning herewith without my approval S.J. Res. 22, a resolution that would nullify a rule issued by the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of the Army to clarify the jurisdictional boundaries of the Clean Water Act. The rule, which is a product of extensive public involvement and years of work, is critical to our efforts to protect the Nation’s waters and keep them clean; is responsive to calls for rulemaking from the Congress, industry, and community stakeholders; and is consistent with decisions of the United States Supreme Court.

We must protect the waters that are vital for the health of our communities and the success of our businesses, agriculture, and energy development. As I have noted before, too many

of our waters have been left vulnerable. Pollution from upstream sources ends up in the rivers, lakes, reservoirs, and coastal waters near which most Americans live and on which they depend for their drinking water, recreation, and economic development. Clarifying the scope of the Clean Water Act helps to protect these resources and safeguard public health. Because this resolution seeks to block the progress represented by this rule and deny businesses and communities the regulatory certainty and clarity needed to invest in projects that rely on clean water, I cannot support it. I am therefore vetoing this resolution.

BARACK OBAMA

The White House,
January 19, 2016.

Remarks in Detroit, Michigan

January 20, 2016

The President. Hello, Detroit! Oh, it’s good to be back in Michigan, even though it might

be just a little cold here. [*Laughter*] But I’m from Chicago, so I’m used to it.