

**Remarks on Presenting the Bell of
the U.S.S. *Canberra* to Prime
Minister John Howard of Australia**

September 10, 2001

Well, Mr. Secretary, thank you for those generous comments. It reconfirms once again the reason I picked you. [Laughter] I appreciate your service to the Navy, and I appreciate your service to the country.

I'm honored today to join with the Navy to receive a distinguished visitor and to present a symbol of America's esteem. Prime Minister Howard leads a nation that has been our partner in ANZUS for 50 years, and a friend far longer. Mr. Prime Minister and Mrs. Howard, it's a real pleasure to have you with us, and also those of you who made the journey with the Prime Minister. Welcome to America.

My thanks as well to Admirals Clark and Weaver and to all the men and women of the United States military who are with us today. We're sure proud of you.

Those who defend America have always had a special regard for our Australian allies. And I know—I know—they're really proud to show that regard today.

Another reason we chose this site, Mr. Prime Minister, is that we have a gift for you. And it's not that easy to move around. This bell that you are going to receive has traveled for almost 25 years aboard the only American ship ever commissioned in honor of an ally's fallen vessel, the U.S.S. *Canberra*. She no longer sails, but she gave faithful service. And this bell is a reminder of a faithful partner in times of crisis and in times of calm.

U.S.S. *Canberra* received her name at the request of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt at the height of World War II. The President had received word of an exceptional action in battle by the Australian Navy, which were steaming alongside American vessels at Guadalcanal. His Majesty's Australian Ship *Canberra* did not survive the battle, disappearing into the depths where she rests today. It was a great loss of life, and much heroism amongst the Australian sailors and marines on board. As a sign of gratitude to those men and to their country, the U.S.S. *Canberra* was commissioned the very next

year, serving my country and honoring yours, Mr. Prime Minister.

One man who served aboard the original *Canberra* was Lieutenant Mackenzie Gregory, and we're greatly honored to have him with us today. Where is Mr. Gregory? Thank you for being here, sir. We're honored to have you. You must have been a young guy. [Laughter]

President Roosevelt knew a trustworthy ally when he saw one. Every President since then has felt and known the same esteem for Australia.

Mr. Prime Minister, it was one of your own predecessors, a wartime leader, who captured the spirit that has always made us natural allies. "We work for the same kind of free world," observed Sir Robert Gordon Menzies. "We govern ourselves in democracy, and we will not tolerate anything less. We cherish liberty and hold it safe, providing hope for the rest of the world."

In the century just passed, Australians served side by side with Americans in every major military commitment. In peaceful times like our own, the alliance between our two nations has helped spare the world from other wars and dangers. Australia is a strong and peaceful presence in East Asia and the Pacific.

Australia is a generous land, mindful of the struggles of poorer nations, always helping when and where it can. Your Government and your good people are an example of democracy, individual liberty, and the virtues of free trade amongst all nations.

On this official visit to our country, I know that you will meet with nothing but good will. And in meetings with Congress and my administration, you will find willing partners who understand Australia's importance as a strategic and economic ally. Though half a world apart, we belong to a very close community of values and aspirations.

From this visit, Mr. Prime Minister, I hope that you will take away renewed optimism about our shared future. And I know that you will take with you a parcel weighing approximately 250 pounds. [Laughter] It's a fine bell with a great history. And once you get it home, it will always stand as a sign of the unbounded respect of our Nation for the Australian people.

Welcome to America. May God bless Australia, and may God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:45 a.m. in Leutze Park at the Historical Washington Navy Yard. In his remarks, he referred to Janette Howard, wife of Prime Minister Howard; Adm. Vernon E. Clark, USN, Chief of Naval Operations; and Rear Adm. Christopher E. Weaver, USN, Commandant, Naval District of Washington. The President also referred to ANZUS, the Security Treaty Between Australia, New Zealand, and the United States of America. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Prime Minister John Howard.

Exchange With Reporters on Returning From the Washington Navy Yard

September 10, 2001

Prime Minister Howard's Visit

Q. Mr. President, can you tell us your thoughts, sir, on more tax cuts?

The President. I'm honored the Prime Minister is here. He's a great friend. Australia's a great friend, and we're so honored he's here. I'm sure we'll have a good, constructive visit. And we've had a great start.

Education

Q. Mr. President, what's your message on education today? Do you have anything to say about education today, Mr. President?

The President. In Florida.

NOTE: The exchange began at 10:10 a.m. in the West Wing Lobby Entrance at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Exchange With Reporters Following Discussions With Prime Minister Howard

September 10, 2001

Australia-U.S. Free Trade Agreement

Q. Mr. President, how do you feel about a free trade agreement with Australia?

The President. We've had a good discussion about it.

Q. Progress, sir?

The President. I think we've made some good progress; you bet. I appreciate the Prime Minister being here. Australia is a great friend to the United States, and it's an honor to welcome him and the delegation here.

Q. Does the agreement still have to wait until after the FDA here?

The President. We're making good progress. He's certainly making a good case.

Legislative Agenda

Q. Mr. President, if you had to choose between education and your tax cut, which would you choose?

The President. I'm going to Florida today—

Q. Have fun.

The President. —to talk about education.

I hope the Australian press is kinder to you than the American press is to me.

Bush-Howard Discussions

Q. How have you found the discussions—

Prime Minister Howard. Dennis? You heard that, Dennis?

Q. Yes?

Prime Minister Howard. You just listen to the man. He speaks great common sense. [Laughter]

Q. Mr. Howard, how have you found the discussions so far with Mr. Bush?

Prime Minister Howard. Very good. I mean, we are very close friends. We covered just about everything you could cover in the time. We're going to continue over lunch to talk about some of the regional issues. And it's a great opportunity to reinforce what a deep friendship it is. And the President and I have a great similarity of views on many issues, and it's a great experience to be able to exchange them with somebody who holds the views he does.

Q. Have you provided an update on the—

Prime Minister Howard. I can't hear you; I'm sorry.

Q. Have you provided an update on the HMAS *Manoora* at all?

Prime Minister Howard. Haven't discussed it.