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REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT,
PRIME MINISTER JOHN HOWARD
AND OPPOSITION LEADER KIM BEAZLEY
IN TOAST REMARKS

The Great Hall
The Parliament House
Canberra, Australia

1:25 P.M. (L)

PRIME MINISTER HOWARD: Mr. President; Mrs. Clinton; Your Excellencies; the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Beazley, my parliamentary colleagues; state premiers; ladies and gentlemen: This is, by any measure, a special occasion. We welcome the President of the United States, a person recently reelected to lead the most powerful nation in the world. We also welcome him as the leader of a nation with which we have so much in common.

Our relationship is a very deep and rich one. It's a relationship that is forged on the basis of many common values, many common elements of our history, our common service on the battlefields of the world in defense of liberty and in defense of freedom.

We welcome him as a friend. He comes here as the leader of a nation with which we have shared so much in the past, but with which we share so much in the future. One of the, I think, great elements of the relationship between the United States and Australia is that we are in the process of transforming a relationship that was forged in early and more difficult circumstances into a new partnership in the Asia Pacific region.

We welcome both of you, Mr. President, as friends of this country. We hope that you will enjoy your stay here. The President of the United States is always welcome in Australia. (Applause.) But as Dr. Johnson reminded us, we should always keep our relationships in good repair and we should never take close relationships for granted. We should always work on them, nurture them and water them. And that is what today's visit and today's events are all about.

We hope you have a delightful time. We hope you have some time off, as well as some time for work. You are very, very welcome, Mr. President and Mrs. Clinton. (Applause.)

I would now invite the leader of the opposition, Mr. Kim Beazley to support my remarks. (Applause.)

MR. BEAZLEY: Thank you very much, Mr. Prime Minister.

Mr. President, Mrs. Clinton, Excellencies, parliamentary colleagues, ladies and gentlemen: This is a delightful occasion for all us here in this hall. I don't think I've set it decked out better. And I think you'll find the entertainment very much to your taste and I think you'll find your time here in Australia about as enjoyable as you can fit into four days, which is lunatically short. (Laughter.) I've got

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to tell you that. But we'll do the very best for you we can while you're here, all of us.

I am delighted, too, to see Mrs. Clinton here, as well, after the enormous dedication and energy that she's shown in assisting your administration and in the course of the last election. (Applause.)

And I want to congratulate you on that election victory. I always like to see a fellow win an election. It's a -- it's a delight for those of us in opposition to think that these things can occur from time to time. (Laughter.) It was a historic one, indeed.

Looking back, you are the only southern Democrat since Appomattox to win a second term. Woodrow Wilson doesn't count -- he won it from New Jersey. So you're the only southern Democrat since Appomattox to win a second term as a President of the United States. And I don't mention Appomattox in a gratuitous fashion here at all. It was a defining moment for the modern American nation -- the event which underwrote America's role in the 20th century. That you reunited after that, that you emerged with your morality intact meant that America could exercise leadership of the democratic nations this century.

And America has been the bastion of democracy this century, as you visited at the end of it. If you'd been visiting us here in the middle, of course, you'd have been a bastion looking around you seeing democracy in retreat everywhere. The stand that the United States took for the entirety of this century means that you visit here now and you look at democracy as the norm -- as the system governing the nations around the globe. And in those fights and struggles that you've had over the years this century to preserve that, to keep decency alive in international politics, it's been a matter of some pride for us here in this nation that we have been there with you as well.

There's another reason why I want to mention Appomattox and note -- and your status as the most successful southern Democratic candidate for President since that period of time. The way in which you reached out to all Americans of all ethnic, racial, cultural and religious backgrounds, and included them in your vision of the United States is an inspiration to all of us. (Applause.)

In the days when I was Defense Minister, it was fashionable to say that the United States was in decline. What an extraordinary change over the course of the last decade. The way in which the global economy works from this point on, the needs and security of the nations of the economy mean, if anything, America's role has got larger over the last decade and the opportunity greater.

As the new international economy emerges, based on, essentially, information technology and telecommunications, once again there's United States companies, United States initiatives leading the way. And I don't think there's been any President of the United States who comprehends that better than you.

So I'm looking forward to learning a great deal from you during the course of this visit. I think that you've got quite a story to tell in this country. But don't tell it for too long. Get out on the beaches. Get out on the golf courses. Get out snorkeling and have a terrific time here. (Applause.)

PRIME MINISTER HOWARD: Thank you, Mr. Beazley. I now invite the President to respond. (Applause.)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Prime Minister and Mrs. Howard, Mr. Speaker and Mrs. Halverson, Madame President, Mr. Reid, Mr. Beazley, Ms. Annus, Ambassador McCarthy: Let me say that Hillary and I and all of us in our delegation

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have very much looked forward to coming here. So far, our experiences have even exceeded our hopes. We have loved every minute of it. I love the crowds welcoming us in last night. I think I like Mr. Beazley reminding me that I'm the first southern Democrat since Appomattox to be elected twice. But I'll have to wait until I get home to see how that plays at home. (Laughter.)

We're grateful to be here in Canberra, where there is clearly a touch of America in the planning of Walter Burley Griffin, who came from Hillary's home state of Illinois. We feel very much that we are at home and among friends.

This morning I had a good meeting with the Prime Minister. I was honored to meet your Cabinet. I was honored to reaffirm our remarkable security relationship, to review our common efforts to reduce the danger of weapons of mass destruction, an effort in which Australian leadership has been so vital.

We're working to provide peace and stability in the Asia Pacific region together. And together we're going to make a big difference in building the prosperity of tomorrow, increasing the ties of trade and investment not only between our two nations, but throughout the area.

The scope and depth of our cooperation for a long time now is truly extraordinary, but not surprising. It is the hallmark of a relationship between two democracies that has grown through struggles of five wars and a whole century's hard labors of peace. Half a world of oceans separates us, but the currents of friendship and commerce and culture flow constantly between our shores and they are more binding than the land bridges that connected the continents eons ago.

We have always looked to Australia with great hope, with great trust, with great admiration. We see those expectations from what may be the very first official United States act dealing with Australia. In 1779, Benjamin Franklin issued an unusual passport for Captain Cook who was then returning from one of his explorations here in the South Pacific. That was, of course, during our war of independence. And Franklin sent special orders to the commanders of all American ships not to attack the ships of the British captain, but to treat him and his crew with all civility and kindness. He wrote that Cook's explorations would facilitate communication between distant nations to the benefit of mankind in general.

Franklin was a prophet. From our common struggle in five wars, to the trade we have created, to our shared efforts to reduce the nuclear threat, the bonds between our distant nations have indeed been an immense benefit not only to ourselves, but to mankind in general. The United States is profoundly grateful for this relationship, for the affection and the warmth that has grown between our citizens.

For many reasons our ties have grown. One of the most important is that we see in each other qualities that we prize and hope for in ourselves. We admire in each other the pioneering spirit that our forbears brought to the tasks of pushing back the frontiers and building nations.

As we move into a new century, we face new and very different frontiers. We are called upon not to homestead in the wilderness, but to build for the security and the prosperity of a new era, to deal with the challenges of this new explosion in the global economy and information technology in the diversity within all of our own societies. But we still need that frontier spirit. We still need to believe that with courage and vision and daring and a firm adherence to our shared and unshakable values, we can make the future better than the present and leave a world worthy of our children and our heritage.

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I want all of you to know how very much we Americans like and admire and value Australia and her people. We want the 21st century to be a large partnership between ourselves for the betterment of all of humankind. I believe that we are entering the era of greatest possibility in human history. I believe there will be more people able to live out their dreams than any time in all of human existence if the values, the record, the partnership we have established can chart the way to the future we long to build.

And I promise you that we, in the United States, will do our best to be worthy of our friendship and that kind of future. Thank you very much. (Laughter.)

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1:39 P.M. (L)