

## THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

13  
20 Nov 1996

«start speech»

Mr HOWARD (Bennelong - Prime Minister) (4.10 p.m.) - Mr Speaker, Madam President, it is only the second time in the history of this parliament that the two houses have sat together to hear an address from a visiting head of state or visiting head of government. That circumstance itself is a token of the particular esteem in which the office of the Presidency of the United States of America is held by the Australian people, and it is also a markedly special relationship that exists between our two countries.

Mr President, when the six colonies of Australia federated in 1901 to form the Commonwealth of Australia, we adopted a Westminster system of parliamentary government. But we borrowed extensively from the United States of America in relation to our other constitutional forms. We named our lower house the House of Representatives and our upper house the Senate, after the pattern of your country. We decided to assign specific powers to the central government with the residue to the state governments, after the pattern of your country. We borrowed heavily on your federal experience. The history of Australia from the parliamentary point of view has been that mixture. But out of that amalgam of British and American tracts has emerged a distinctive and characteristic Australian parliamentary democracy. It has been an echo of the

THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

20 Nov 1996

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aspirations of the Australian people over the long years since Federation.

There are only a very small number of countries which have continuously been democratic through the 20th century. The United States of America and Australia are two of that small and very select number of nations. For that reason, above many other reasons, your presence here today is warmly received, warmly welcomed and warmly applauded by all of the Australian people, irrespective of their political beliefs. It is rare indeed that we have an assembly of all members and senators across the party divide unanimously to welcome the leader of a great nation, a nation which has led the cause of freedom and the battle for freedom and the values we all share in common over such a long period of time.

We both belong to a robust democratic tradition. We both belong to nations that believe in individual liberty, believe in personal values, believe in the freedom of the press, believe in the separation of the judiciary from the legislative and the executive. For all of those reasons, and many others, you are indeed a very welcome guest.

I hope, Mr President, that your time here in Canberra is one that you remember fondly. We certainly will. I hope both you and Mrs Clinton enjoy your time and carry with you a special recollection of your addressing this joint sitting of

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THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

20 Nov 1996

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the parliament of the Australian people.

<end speech>

## THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

20 Nov 1996

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«start speech»

Mr BEAZLEY (Brand - Leader of the Opposition) (4.12 p.m.)  
- Mr Speaker, Mr President, Madam President, honourable members and senators: Mr President, you are most welcome on this historic occasion - as the Prime Minister pointed out, one of only a couple - and we are very proud to be here with you. I should say that there are more than simply the government and opposition represented here. There are a number of Independent members and also members of two other political parties, the Greens and the Australian Democrats. This is a great gathering of all Australian opinion to hear you in this place, and no better forum than this.

George Schultz once said to me, 'How could anybody spend a \$1 billion on a building?' We took him through the building and he worked out how we managed to spend it. It is a place of which we are enormously proud and is a great symbol of our nation and the unity of our nation and the hopes and aspirations of our people. It has within it a very specific Australian design.

It is of course not the first time - your visit here or the visit of your predecessor George Bush - that there has been the involvement of the United States in our parliamentary process, and I think it is useful to reflect on that.

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THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

20 Nov 1996

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Throughout World War II we did have a number of parliamentary briefings given by General Douglas MacArthur, who is a man whose name rings in the halls of fame of this nation and a name that is remembered with gratitude. Which brings to mind the fact that we ought to in this place appreciate through yourself the role of your nation over the last 50 years or so of international history.

«more to come - turn 4 follows»

THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

20 Nov 1996

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«Mr Beazley - in continuation»

You now preside over a nation which has produced probably the most unselfish gesture that any nation has in recorded history - that is, your people have been prepared to lay themselves on the line when they could have been secure in isolation and to risk for themselves nuclear devastation on behalf of their friends. It ought not go unrecorded that we do appreciate that.

It should be said that that sat lightly on this country because I do not think we have ever been in recent times likely to have enemies that would cause the United States to risk that nuclear devastation in assisting us. Nevertheless, we have thought it important for ourselves to play a part in that. I have often argued, particularly when I was the Minister for Defence, that we have never been consumers of American security except in that one period.

I also like to point out to my American colleagues that General Douglas MacArthur had more Australian troops under his command until late 1943 than American. His great victories early in the war in New Guinea were fought substantially with Australian troops. He set that matter at rest and changed the ratios in the Philippines. But, until that point in time, there had been a very substantial contribution. We have made our contribution over those years, too.

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THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

20 Nov 1996

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We very much appreciate the remarks I heard you make in your press conference - that you had praise for the Australian government and successive Australian governments for the role they now wish to play in removing from the American people and the world that terrible obligation. Your praise for the role of our government recently in the comprehensive test ban arrangement was very welcome on all sides of politics here, as is your commitment to ensuring that your people and the world generally have that horror removed from them.

You have been a man who has exercised leadership in this region - whose leadership we all count on. You go from here with our Prime Minister to APEC - the leadership component of which you had so much to do with in initiating. That forum is now broadening its wings from simply a consideration of economic matters, as critical as those are, to broader regional considerations.

We have always sought American engagement in this region. We have never always agreed with you on the things that you have chosen to do in that time, but we have always sought it because we have always believed that at the end of the day the values we share are the same. Those values are decent human values. Those values are egalitarian values that recognise the rights of all people of all backgrounds. Those values are values which at the end of the day ensure world peace and

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THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

20 Nov 1996

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ensure decent living standards. So it is a privilege for me to stand here today on behalf my party to welcome you.

«end speech»