

C H E C K A G A I N S T D E L I V E R Y
A U S T R A L I A N - A M E R I C A N A S S O C I A T I O N

30TH ANNIVERSARY DINNER - VICTORIAN BRANCH

MELBOURNE, VIC.

7 OCTOBER, 1971.

SPEECH NOTES FOR THE PRIME MINISTER

Mr. President, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

When I look around this crowded room tonight I feel in great heart knowing that there are in every community, good and able people, ready and willing to make a deliberate effort to keep our vital friendships in good repair and to convince others to do the same.

I am glad to be here tonight, Mr. Baxter, as the guest of your association and its members for this thirtieth anniversary celebration dinner of the Victorian Branch of the Australian-American Association.

My wife and I have both travelled widely together in America and we are the first to acknowledge the warmth and friendliness of its people and the greatness of its achievements in the cavalcade of history. We have shared many happy and exciting associations with our American friends on the other side of the Pacific.

Sir, we are delighted to see so many old friends here tonight and if I may be forgiven for singling out two very distinguished people I want to say it is wonderful to have Lord and Lady Casey with us at this table. None knows better than they how the links between Australia and America have been forged over the years and I doubt if anyone has done as much as they have to make those links secure. I know what a strength Lord Casey has been to the Australian-American Association since its earliest days. I do congratulate the Association on living this long life and one which I trust has been a merry as well as a rewarding one. I am told, too, Sir, that the women's group and the Junior American Association really keep the men on their toes. Congratulations to you too.

Now Sir, I hope you will forgive me for being serious tonight but an anniversary occasion like this tempts me to look briefly over the past, and then, more particularly to look forward into the future in our relationships with America.

I think the pre-eminent characteristic of the United States in the international community has been its deep sense of responsibility to work towards a more stable and equitable world order. It has given concrete evidence of its readiness to make human and material sacrifices for this purpose. It has given its blood and its treasure in formidable quantities. That hasn't always been appreciated and often not understood. If we can do something to explain and correct this we serve our own interests and take up a proper position as fair-minded people.

It is easy to scoff at our democratic institutions. The way they work and the things they do, be they of the American, the British or the Australian order; And I quote Franklin Roosevelt on this point. What he had to say was this - and I quote:-

"I get everlastingly angry at those who assert vociferously that the four freedoms and the Atlantic Charter are nonsense because they are unattainable.

"If those people had lived a century and a half ago they would have sneered and said that the Declaration of Independence was utter piffle.

"If they had lived nearly a thousand years ago they would have laughed uproariously at the ideals of Magna Carta.

"And if they had lived several thousand years ago they would have derided Moses when he came down from the mountain with the Ten Commandments".

Ladies and Gentlemen, your Association was born in the dark days of World War II and at that time, and in the years since then, the United States has been a significant, and indeed a decisive, factor in our security. We must be grateful for the partnership with the United States which prevented a possible invasion of Australia and led to the re-conquest of the Pacific by the allies.

Australia was, of course, an essential base for operations. Then we must acknowledge the effective leadership given by the United States checking communist aggression in Korea and in Vietnam. We signed the Anzus Treaty with them and to this day that Treaty ranks as our most important Treaty.

I have travelled the Pacific many times. I have seen the distance shrink as the jets have devoured the space and I have seen South-East Asia change from a region of turbulence to one with a more settled and confident prospect.

I have sat in the Australian Cabinet for many years and joined in the vital decisions we have taken to identify ourselves more deliberately and more closely with the region to which geographically we belong.

One of the essential elements in our policy towards South East Asia has been the Australian-American alliance. It is of crucial importance to our foreign policy. This will continue to be a basic element of our policy, but the changed nature of the political situation in South East Asia must carry with it changes in the nature of our relationship with the United States in that region.

The United States and Australia have similar objectives. We should both like to see a region which is stable politically, developing rapidly economically and within which the peoples are free to choose their own forms of governments. Nevertheless Australia must recognise that its own particular interests in this part of the world may call for different judgements on its part from those of the United States.

Let us look at some of the changes that have occurred within our own part of the world. The first - which has received widespread publicity - has been the change in United States policy itself, broadly encompassed under what is known as the Nixon Doctrine.

Clearly the United States is no longer prepared to attempt alone and on a global scale the containment of aggression and the construction of a reasonably stable framework of international co-operation. While maintaining its general support and protection, it has called upon the countries of the region to do more to help themselves. We accept this, and the challenge and responsibility of greater self-reliance.

The second major change within the South-East Asia region has been the re-emergence of the influence of powers other than the United States. This re-emergence has begun to complicate the international political situation.

Japan with its enormous economic strength is in a position to make a major contribution to the development of the region. It has regained its international confidence, and its relations with South-East Asian countries will be increasingly important in the political equations of the area.

The People's Republic of China appears to be giving less emphasis to the rigidities of ideology in the conduct of its foreign policy and to be showing a new interest in the establishment of more traditional diplomatic and commercial relationships.

Russia, too, has begun to try to increase its influence in the area, and to seek closer ties with South East Asian Governments. All these moves are only to be expected; great powers have always interested themselves in affairs outside their own borders, and will continue to do so.

The third major change that I shall note in the region has been the establishment of increasingly confident and capable national governments, dedicated to the objectives of economic progress, social welfare and regional co-operation. This is a development which has been made possible in large measure by successful allied resistance to the aggression against South Vietnam.

Most of the peoples of the countries of the region have now established their national identity and have installed governments capable of planning their futures, and resisting, with a minimum of outside assistance, efforts by minority groups to overthrow the national political order.

Of one thing I am sure, in the period that lies ahead, the need for consultation between us will not be less, but greater. Increasingly with our political and defence relations, other aspects of our relationship with the United States can be expected to assume greater importance - for example trade, investment, civil aviation.

In the process, differences between us are bound to arise but there is no reason why we cannot continue to discuss them fully and frankly, as we have in the past, and in a spirit of give and take. This is what a partnership is for.

We look forward to a future where the United States continues to take a wise and constructive role in the achievement of a peaceful world order and we expect to make our own individual and independent contribution to the realisation of the same objective.

We have shared the dangers of the past in friendship. Let us share, in the same way, the promise of the future.

I thank you.
