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PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

20 FEBRUARY 1990

To mark the 50th anniversary of the establishment of Australia's first independent diplomatic mission in the United States, President Bush and I have exchanged the following messages:

"Dear Bob:

I am pleased to extend sincere best wishes to you and to the people of Australia on the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of an independent Australian diplomatic mission in the United States.

Those who know Australia as an active and respected member of the international community and who have witnessed the skill and wide-ranging scope of Australian diplomacy may find it hard to believe that Australia's independent diplomatic mission in Washington dates only to February 20, 1940. Although many changes have taken place in the world during the ensuing half century, the warmth between our peoples has never diminished. Moreover, the United States and Australia wisely have used this time to build a bilateral relationship and a firm alliance that has never been stronger. Sharing common values, our cooperation contributes greatly to global peace and security and the expansion of the benefits of trade.

Please accept my congratulations as we mark this historic occasion. We can look forward to working together to continue this half century's success for many years to come.

George Bush"

5.3.90

"Dear George

On the 50th anniversary of the establishment of Australia's first independent diplomatic mission in Washington, I wish to extend my warmest best wishes to you and the American people on behalf of the Government and people of Australia.

It was on 20 February 1940 that Richard Casey arrived in Washington as Minister for Australia and set about establishing Australia's first independent diplomatic mission there. Since that time, the relationship has become, overall, Australia's most important single international relationship and one of extraordinary diversity, depth and warmth.

While the ANZUS Treaty remains at the heart of the commitment of each country to the other in relation to that most fundamental of all Government obligations - the security of the nation - our bilateral connections have grown to encompass vital trade and commercial links, regular and valued exchanges on political and economic issues, and a wealth of contacts not only at the Government level, but between individual Australian and American men and women in all walks of life.

This 50th anniversary comes at the beginning of what may well be a new and dynamic phase in world history, with changes to the global political landscape taking place at breath-taking speed. That the United States is playing a key role in this process is something which we wholeheartedly welcome. Australians in many fields also have a contribution to make to this process, and at the official level there will be scope to reinforce and build on the diplomatic links and cooperation that have been forged over these past five decades. We are pledged to play our part.

Our respective embassies today have staffs in the hundreds, but there has been no lessening of the close personal contact and style that has marked our official relationship from the day our first mission opened its doors in your capital city. As we mark this historic occasion together, I am supremely confident that this spirit will continue to characterise the relationship as will our ability always to talk with frankness and friendship to each other, respecting our differences with maturity and drawing strength from those many values, goals and policies on which we are united.

Bob Hawke"

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