



American Australian Education Leadership Foundation

John D. Negroponte, Deputy Secretary of State

Remarks at Leadership Dialogue Dinner

Washington, DC

June 24, 2008

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen: it is a great pleasure to welcome you to the Benjamin Franklin rooms of the Department of State. On behalf of Secretary Rice, I'd like to say how delighted we are to be able to host some of our closest and most important Australian visitors for an evening with some of Australia's best friends and supporters in the United States.

The U.S.-Australia alliance means a great deal to the United States for two principal reasons: it reflects the unique historical aspects of our relationship; and it is a paradigm for cooperation in addressing new global and regional challenges.

Prime Minister Rudd's visit here, so early in his administration, testified to the enduring nature of our friendship and commitment to shared concerns.

Ours is not only a political or military alliance; it is an alliance of common values and dreams. That is why it has proven so adept at evolving with changing circumstances.

The historical parallels between our nations are intriguing. These include our colonial origins, our democratic development, and the perspectives that democracy promotes. We'd say our system of governance and democracy gives every individual "a fair shake." Australians would say every individual has a "fair go." But the meaning is the same. If you are an Australian or an American, you count. And cultural and ethnic diversity in our countries enriches us both.

Our interaction goes back to the dawn of our emergence as nation states:

- Three Americans sailed with Captain James Cook on the Endeavor in 1770.
- The American vessel Philadelphia anchored in Sydney harbor in 1792, only four years after the arrival of the "First Fleet" from England.
- American seafarers operated in Australian waters in late 18th and early 19th centuries; the resulting volume of trade resulted in the first U.S. consulate opening in Sydney in 1837.
- In the 1840s, it was our turn for a gold rush, and thousands of Australians arrived in California in the 1840s to share in the fun. In the 1850s, it was your turn. Some 10,000 Americans plunged into the Australian gold fields seeking their fortune.
- We are proud that Americans Walter Burley Griffin and his wife, Marion Mahoney, designed Australia's capital Canberra.
- We're also proud that in 1908, Australians gave a tumultuous welcome to 16 U.S. Navy ships arriving for a port visit only seven years after the Australian Federation was formed.

Americans and Australians do tend to get along with each other; there's no doubt about it. People-to-people contacts are a hallmark of our alliance. One of our earliest treaties (even predating the 1951 ANZUS Treaty) established the Fulbright program in Australia in 1949. As a result:

- More than 4,000 Americans and Australians have studied in each others' countries as Fulbright scholars
- Prominent American Fulbright scholars include author John Updike, Pulitzer Prize winning composer George Crumb, Nobel laureate for medicine Dr. Joshua Lederberg, Senate Watergate Commission Counsel Samuel Dash, Harvard Professor Nathan Glazer, and my friend and former colleague, Ambassador Thomas Pickering.
- Australian Fulbrighters have been just as distinguished. They include The Honorable Justice Robert Nicholson, former Education Minister and Environment Minister David Kemp, author Christopher Kosh, former High Court judge Sir Ronald Wilson.
- And it gives me great satisfaction to note that the Australian National University is home to a Fulbright Distinguished Chair in American Political Studies, one of only 17 in the world and the only one in Asia.

Beyond Fulbright, thousands of Americans and Australians annually enroll in each other's universities. In fact, Australia is in the top five on the list of choices of U.S. students for study abroad. For our part, we recently established a bilateral "working holiday" exchange program that allows for young Australians to work and travel in the United States from four months to one year.

We will do everything we can to keep our relationship with Australia strong because in times of trouble and danger, Australians are among the first to make the hard decisions, accept the hard duties, and to fight bravely until the fighting is done.

Australia and the United States have fought side by side in every major military engagement since WWI, when our forces shed blood together in the capture of Le Hamel in France.

But WWII truly marked the genesis of our modern alliance, especially the Battle of the Coral Sea in 1942 where U.S. and Australian naval forces forestalled a possible Japanese invasion of Australia.

These valiant efforts led us to formalize our alliance through the ANZUS Treaty in 1951. For its part, Australia sought security through a Pacific-based alliance. For our part, the United States was influenced by the Sino-Soviet pact, the emergence of communism in Southeast Asia, and the outbreak of war in Korea.

Now we are partners in the 21st Century's defining struggle to defeat terrorism and extremism. Our embassies, citizens, and cities have been targeted, but we will not yield to barbaric violence.

The United States and Australia were on the ground together in the international coalition to bring freedom and democracy to Afghanistan and Iraq. And our alliance not only defends freedom and ensures security but also provides a framework that allows us to improve people's lives.

Together we have provided aid to those whose lives were shattered by the tsunami; together we have rebuilt roads, schools, and hospitals in Afghanistan and Iraq; together we have worked to stop the proliferation of nuclear weapons, together we have advanced the frontiers of science and technology; and together we have fought disease.

The economic benefits of our alliance are extraordinary. Since the U.S.- Australia FTA took effect on January 2005:

- Overall trade has increased 34.9 percent and goods exported to the U.S. have grown by 14 percent.
- Meanwhile service exports have grown dramatically: U.S. exports are up over 45 percent and Australia's by over 51 percent.

The U.S.-Australian alliance has therefore been of enormous value. Together we have advanced the cause of freedom, dismantled trade barriers, provided humanitarian aid to people in need, and protected our citizens against the spread of weapons of mass destruction and the threat of terrorism.

Simply put, the United States and Australia alliance is greater than the sum of its parts. We get more done and do it smarter when we work together. Our satisfaction in our accomplishments is eclipsed only by the true friendship, respect, and understanding that characterizes our cooperation.

Those of you who support the America-Australia Education Leadership Foundation, and everyone else who contributes so much to our bilateral relationship, deserve great praise.

We are nations built on the goodwill of our citizens. It is you who make us prosper and you who give our governments the support and resources necessary to ensure that in the future, as in the past, our democracies will remain strong and free.

Thank you very much.

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