



## U.S.-Australian Relations In A New Era

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**UNDER SECRETARY BURNS:** Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. I'm sorry to be just a little bit late, but I'm very pleased to be at the Lowy Institute. I have heard a lot about it -- although I have never been here before -- and am happy to be at this podium.

And I want to say to the Australians present -- and I guess that's most of you in this group -- this is my very first visit to Australia. I don't know why it took me 51 years to get here. I'm definitely going to come back. I've just had a limited experience. I was in Canberra on Tuesday and Wednesday, and arrived here last evening. Unfortunately, I've got to go back to Washington because of pressing business back there. But I'm enormously impressed by this country -- I always have been -- by your dynamism politically, certainly by your economy, which is one of the most successful and innovative worldwide. And you may just be the most sports-obsessed country that I know -- (laughter) -- with the possible exception of the people of Boston, Massachusetts, where I come from. We're also sports-obsessed, so we have that unity between Australians and Americans.

I scheduled this visit several months ago. My friend Michael L'Estrange, who is the Permanent Secretary at the Australian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and I, we've been meeting for three years now with our Japanese counterparts in a strategic dialogue among the three allied countries, and so Michael invited us, Mitoji Yabunaka and I, to come out in December. Little did we know that we'd be arriving on the week of a transition from a Howard government to a Rudd government. And so it's been an auspicious time to be here and I certainly congratulated the Australian Government on the brilliant victory of the Labor Party and of the Prime Minister. And I said to everyone I could meet -- Australian Government official or Australian citizen -- that we very much look forward to working with this government and we intend to keep the close alliance between Australia and the United States. I met with the Deputy Prime Minister, Julia Gillard; met with Stephen Smith, the new Foreign Minister; met with Joel Fitzgibbons, the new Defense Minister; Tony Burke, new Agriculture Minister; and lots of other people. And I must say we had great discussions. I was enormously impressed by them. They're all smart people. They're very open. They're very knowledgeable. I would count all of them as friends of the United States and I hope they know that we're friends of Australia.

And I told them that we're going to maintain the close partnership and alliance. It was interesting; Stephen Smith told me -- he's, of course, from Western Australia -- that it was a Labor prime minister in 1942, John Curtin, who established the alliance with the United States at the most challenging time perhaps that Australia and the United States have faced together over the last century. And so there's nice symmetry now; a Labor government comes in and we reaffirm that alliance with Australia. And our respect for the country, of course, and our mutual interests demand that we do so.

My job in Washington is to look around the world on a global basis and try to help coordinate our diplomacy on a worldwide basis, and I think pound for pound we have no better ally in the world than Australia. We've been longtime allies. I went to the war memorial in Canberra. The first thing I did when I arrived early on Tuesday morning -- and I was, frankly, really overwhelmed by it. I've seen Australian and Commonwealth war cemeteries in El Alamein, in the Egyptian desert, in Crete, because of the Crete campaign in 1941, and in Athens. But to see this magnificent tribute to 102,000 Australian men and women who lost their lives for your country and for our alliance, you're the only country in the world that has fought with us and we with you in every major conflict going back to the Great War. The only one. The Great War and the Second World War, of course, in the Pacific Theater, in Europe, in Korea, in Vietnam, and in the two Iraq wars and Afghanistan. And so we're enormously grateful. And I felt that looking at that war memorial. And you should be really proud of it. I'm sure all of you have been there. It's a great tribute to this expeditionary country and the fact that so many hundreds of thousands of your soldiers had to go abroad to very, very difficult and challenging places for such a long time.

I was told there that Americans fought under Australian command in the Great War at the Battle of Hummel\*, and I knew from my own dad who was a veteran of the Second World War that Aussie diggers and American GIs were together in the MacArthur campaigns from Darwin all the way up to September 2, 1945 at Tokyo Bay. And I've seen in Afghanistan the Australian contingent and we're very grateful for what Australia has done there and very grateful for what Australians have done in Iraq over the past several years.

So I thought I should start on that basis just to note the connection between our militaries and the connection between our peoples and our generations going back well beyond our parents, my dad, to our great grandparents' and grandparents' generation. This is a common history that we have and it's a very important one, I think, for Americans to memorialize for Australians.

On a global basis, we see Australia punching above its weight. As we look at your militarily, diplomatically, on intelligence, on the cutting edge of trade and investigation and on technological innovation. And Australians are seen, at least by Americans, to be effective in the world and we're proud to be your friends on that basis.

Now, our partnership and the alliance that we need to maintain is not just based on sentimentality, although there's a lot of that in our relationship. It's based on clear national interest, on how we appreciate the challenges in the world. It's based on our democratic values. It's based on our shared interests in maintaining the peace in Asia, and I think it's that shared sense of national interest, mutual national interest, that will be the glue that holds this together as we transition from one Australian government to the next. And in 13 months time, we will transition from the current American administration to some other American administration, to be decided by the American people, beginning January 3rd in the Iowa caucuses extending all the way through to the first Tuesday in November 2008.

And as we Americans think about your country, we start with geography. You are a Pacific nation, an Asian nation. We consider ourselves to be a Pacific nation and we do share a common view with you of the strategic importance and particularly true of the 21st century of challenges in the Asia-Pacific region. And our strategy for this region is relatively straightforward: Like you, we aim to assure democratic rule where it exists; to promote it where it needs to be promoted, in places like Burma; to assure freedom, justice, human dignity, human rights. Those are common Australian and American values.

We are fortunate in the United States that I think we have a bipartisan consensus among our two political parties, the Republican and Democratic parties, that America needs to remain fully engaged in the Asia-Pacific region because we appreciate that our vital national interests are engaged here. That's been true since Pearl Harbor. We commemorate that on Pearl Harbor Day tomorrow in the United States of America. It's been true throughout the entire prosecution of the Second World War and in every year since then.

And what that means is that the United States needs to remain engaged militarily -- to maintain our military forces here -- to be a positive element that ensures a peaceful region. We need to maintain our trade and investment ties. We need to maintain our political activity in ASEAN, in APEC. We need to engage with China constructively, a rising China, an increasingly powerful China. That's a common American and Australian interest.

And the absolute core of our policy is to achieve peace and achieve stability and to maintain a core commitment to our treaty allies -- Australia, Japan, South Korea, Thailand and the Philippines; to maintain a close partnership with countries that are important to the balance of power and to the future, like Singapore where I visited earlier this week; and to maintain, in the diplo-speak of modern statecraft, the architectural diplomacy of the ARF, the ASEAN Regional Forum, of the ASEAN-U.S. relationship and the ASEAN-Australia relationship, and of APEC, a solid institutional engagement as we go forward. Now, you hosted an APEC summit in September. It

was a very successful summit. It made some progress -- that summit -- in defining the challenge on climate change. We may not agree on all the elements of climate change, but I think we do agree on the challenge and the necessity of a global solution to it.

There was some small progress in furthering the Doha trade round of negotiations, but we are still frustrated that we're not at the end, a successful end, of those negotiations. We made a renewed commitment to APEC and I think your government did as well. So we appreciate the Australian hosting of APEC and we look forward to working with Australia in APEC and in ASEAN as well.

Our most important objective here is to maintain the alliance, as I've said; is to maintain the economic growth; is to maintain a sense of shared partnership in this region. And I thought I might offer to you just an American perspective of what our most important common challenges may be as the Rudd government is sworn in, as that government in its fourth day of office begins to think about Australia's positions on the leading issues in the world. And I offer this as a sense of a shared agenda for Australians and Americans as we look forward.

And just for the sake of argumentation and persuasion, perhaps, let me offer five common challenges that our two countries face. The first is to be effective here in the Asia-Pacific region, and that starts with your engagement with China and our engagement with China. We, very famously, several years ago said that we are not interested in establishing a containment structure against China, as we did against the Soviet Union in the late 1940s and carried that all the way through to the late '80s and early '90s until the Soviet Union itself fell apart, disintegrated peacefully in December 1991. We seek to engage China across the board, knowing that on some issues we will disagree quite strongly with the Chinese Government -- on human rights, on religious rights, on labor practices, on intellectual property rights, on the enormous gulf that we have on free and fair trade between China and the United States -- but also to challenge China in a positive sense. And that's to say to the Chinese you are a part of the global governing structure of the world, the unofficial global governing structure of the world, you are also officially and formally a permanent member of the UN Security Council. So China has a stake in achieving peace in the world and achieving stability and working out hard problems.

And so our foreign policy agenda, and I think yours as well, has been to say to the Chinese can we together in the six-party talks achieve the dismantlement of North Korea's nuclear programs and an end to the threat posed by North Korea? And my friend and colleague, Chris Hill, was in Pyongyang to visit the reactor just a couple of days ago and was in Pyongyang yesterday in meeting with the North Korean Foreign Minister and his colleague the Deputy Foreign Minister Kim Gye Gwan. China has been fundamentally instrumental and helpful and positive over the last year, particularly since the North Korean nuclear test of October 9th, 2006, in helping the six parties, including the United States, to move forward on that issue. That's an important issue.

Can China work with us to limit the threat from Iran, to try to convince the Iranians that the way forward is at the negotiating table, not in continuing an enrichment and reprocessing program at its plant at Natanz that could possibly lead in the future, could lead, to the production of fissile material? I think on that score we've seen recently just over the last week -- and I met with Vice Foreign Minister He Yafei in Paris on Saturday -- we've seen some very constructive Chinese behavior and Chinese attitudes on the issue of Iran. And we'll be continuing this week to work with China and Russia and the three European countries on the construction of a third Security Council sanctions responsible.

Can China help Ban Ki-moon and the countries of the United Nations achieve the entry into Darfur in the next month or two of an effective UN peacekeeping force to protect the people of Darfur from the Janjaweed and other militias? China has a responsibility to do that and we'd like to see more of an effort by China.

And last, just to choose some of the topical issues, can China convince the Burmese generals that they should release Aung San Suu Kyi from house arrest, that they should establish -- help to establish an effective channel of communication between Aung San Suu Kyi and the National League for Democracy on the one hand and the Burmese leadership on the other, so that the horrible events of late September shall not be repeated in that long-suffering country.

So I think we start, and I know that your new prime minister and government starts, with a view that we need to engage China, to be honest with China about our differences but to be constructive and willing to work with China when we can. That's an important interest.

Obviously, we have an important interest in maintaining our alliance in the Asia-Pacific region. And one of the things I did in Canberra was to meet with my Australian and Japanese counterparts over two days, in hours of conversation, to talk about this region. How can the three of us -- Japan, Australia and the United States -- work together in common purpose here in Asia and the Pacific? How can we work in South Asia, in the Middle East, and globally to do the things that we need to do as democracies.

And we don't want to forget the Pacific islands. Australia and the United States have a major engagement. Now, we look to you for leadership and you provide that leadership, as you have in East Timor, as you have in the Solomon Islands in the crisis there, as you and we have together in Fiji. And I'm here with Steve McGann, who is our Director in the State Department for Pacific Island Affairs, and Steve's staying on to have additional talks with the Australian Government. But we value the interaction and the cooperation we have in looking at the Pacific islands as friends and partners as both of our countries, but knowing that both of us have a responsibility in terms of economic aid, in terms of political friendship to help some of these countries, particularly countries like Fiji and the Solomon Islands that are in the grip of some internal disorder.

So I'd pose that as the first common challenge, the Asia-Pacific challenge to both of our countries. And I'd be happy to talk about that when we get to our conversation.

The second challenge will be the Middle East. We spent an enormous amount of time this week in Canberra talking about the Middle East. Our common challenge in Iraq to help the Iraqi people and government achieve political stability, take back the streets of the country from the criminal elements who have been so present in the streets of that country, guard the borders of the country, train the military, train the police, provide governance, assistance, try to help them settle some of the political problems.

Now, I said publicly in Canberra that we, of course, respect the sovereign decision of the new Australian Government to make the decision that it has on the deployment of Australian troops and we spent all of our time talking about how we can continue to cooperate in other areas that are important. And we know that Australia will continue to make a contribution. It will decide -- the Australian Government -- what that contribution will be, but we value it. And I did say and I thought I should say that we very much value the efforts of the young men and women who have gone in uniform from Australia to Iraq over the last several years and have served there, and some who have sacrificed there. I wanted to say that again, that we do value the contribution that Australia has made and we will continue to work well together.

Iran is an important challenge for both of our countries, both Iran's support for the major Middle East terrorist groups and funding and arming them, but also on this nuclear challenge. And there's been a lot of talk about that this week with the publication in Washington of an unclassified version of our National Intelligence Estimate. Now, what's interesting about that National Intelligence Estimate, the unclassified part of it, is that we conclude that Iran had a nuclear weapons program. Iran has never admitted that. So it'd be important for the International Atomic Energy Agency to look into that. We know that Iran continues a ballistic missile development program, which is of quite concern to Iran's neighbors. And we know that Iran continues because it says it does, it admits this openly and ElBaradei reports on it, a scientific and technological research program in its plant at Natanz on centrifuge research, on enrichment and reprocessing. That kind of process could lead to the production of fissile material. And so there's a continuing focus on Iran by both of our governments and by the international community.

Lebanon, where we want the democratic government to survive and prosper. The Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations where my country just led negotiations in Annapolis and we now have a commitment to continue intensive negotiations between Prime Minister Olmert and Abu Mazen, Mahmoud Abbas, over the next year. Our goal is for Israel to live in security and for the Palestinians to have their own state living side by side with Israel.

The international agenda is very much focused on these issues in the Middle East and we appreciate the support and friendship of Australia on all of them.

A third challenge: South Asia. I don't think you would have seen any American official say prior to September 11th, 2001 that South Asia is a place of vital importance for the United States, but it has become that, as it has for many of our European allies, and I think as it has for countries like Japan and South Korea and Australia.

We have the enormous challenge of Afghanistan where on the military side we need to continue to block the Taliban and al-Qaida from seeking to destabilize the democratically elected government of President Karzai. We have the challenge of trying to maintain an effective international military force and we're very grateful for the huge contribution that Australia is making in one of the most difficult provinces in the southern part of the country. We have a challenge of counternarcotics, of the poppy problem and the growth in trade in poppy. And of course, the challenge of an effective international civilian effort in Afghanistan. I found a real connection with the new Australian Government in Canberra on this issue of Afghanistan.

And next week, I'll be in Edinburgh with our Secretary of Defense to meet Defense Minister Fitzgibbons and the Australian Chief of Defense and the eight other countries that are all serving together in Uruzgan, Helmand and Kandahar provinces in the south and in the eastern part of the country. And that's where the challenge is in Afghanistan. That's where 90 percent of the military challenge is. That's a connection point.

We had long discussions in Canberra about Pakistan, about our hope that Pakistan might continue to evolve in a better, more democratic, more stable evolution in the future and that the Pakistani government might be effective in containing and fighting al Qaeda and the Taliban inside Pakistan along the Afghan border. And we did reflect on this positive opportunity in South Asia, the rising power of India, which is positive in the world, which we Americans see as positive, the new global strategic partnership that America and India have been building since -- certainly during President Bush's time but begun by President Clinton in 1995 -- that has solid support from both of our political parties in Washington.

I think Australia is beginning to see and enjoy the benefits of this new relationship with India as are many countries around the world. But we view the rise of Indian power in the world, economic, technological, India's increasing military role with us and with other countries to train and to keep the peace, we view this as positive. And it's a connection point between America and Australia.

The fourth challenge I would submit to you would be counterterrorism. We face the same threats, you in this region, we too, and around the world. We need to be smart about them. Sometimes, the application of military force or a peacekeeping military force in a place like Afghanistan is the right way to go. More often than not, our ability to cooperate on a judicial basis through intelligence cooperation, through economic support to dry up the ability of terrorist groups to launder their money through our financial systems, through diplomatic cooperation, the soft side of the war on terrorism, will be the predominant focus of what we have to do together.

But all the democratic countries of the world need to unite on a global basis to thwart global terrorism. It just stands to reason, and as an additional point of connection between the new government and our own government.

And finally I would say is a fifth challenge for Australia and the United States, would be the multilateral challenge of in a globalized world, where the common denominator of any future challenge that you can think of is international cooperation, it's to rebuild the United Nations and strengthen it, to modernize the Security Council, for instance, and see it grow in number and be more representative of the power relationships in the world in the 21st century versus the way the world was constructed and the Security Council was constructed at the end of the war in 1945.

For Americans to look overseas and see that whether it's NATO in Europe or the Organization of American States in our own hemisphere or ASEAN in Southeast Asia or the African Union in Africa, we need friends and we need to work with regional groupings to achieve a common purpose.

I happen to think that the greatest challenges facing our future will be multilateral: global climate change; the trafficking of women and children, which is a global scourge; international crime cartels; international drug cartels. The emergence of global terrorist groups and their juxtaposition unfortunately, frighteningly, with chemical, biological and nuclear technology, WMD, weapons of mass destruction, if those are at least five of the greatest challenges that we'll face say in the next 50 years, then I think the lesson for us at least as Americans -- I can just speak for my own country -- is we certainly can't be isolationist in the world and be successful in a globalized world, and we cannot be unilateralist.

America has had a 232-year flirtation with isolationism. We have swung wildly back and forth since Jefferson and Madison and Hamilton debated what kind of country we should be in the 18th century, between being isolated from the world or convinced we should be engaged in it.

We had a great national debate in the 1930s about the rise of the fascist powers and one of our great cultural icons, Charles Lindbergh, argued that that wasn't our fight in Germany and in Italy. And fortunately, we had a great visionary president, Franklin Roosevelt, who said it certainly is our fight alongside Britain, France, Poland and Australia. It certainly is our fight. And it was.

Ten years ago, when I was State Department spokesman, we had some members of the Congress saying we didn't need to pay our dues to the U.N. And our Secretary of State at the time, Madeleine Albright, said we certainly do need to pay our dues to the U.N., fully. We're a founding country, we're the host country, we're the largest contributor.

And so I think after 9/11, the great majority of Americans understand we can't afford a flirtation with isolationism in the 21st century; we have got to be fully engaged in the world. But I think also -- and I think President Bush and Secretary Rice and Secretary Gates have spoken to this -- we can't go it alone in the world.

Now, I know that some people have this perception that -- we have unilateralist impulses. But if you look at the foreign policy of our country over the last -- let's say three years, three and a half years, we have dedicated ourselves to a multilateral solution in North Korea, to a multilateral Perm Five solution on the Iranian nuclear problem. We have worked through the United Nations, obviously, to try to get a peacekeeping force into Darfur. And we are trying very hard to work with ASEAN, China, India, Australia, the E.U., to convince the Burmese generals to open up and lighten up and be more tolerant and permissive of the democrats in Burma and of the people of Burma and treat them better and to reform that country.

And so we understand that there may be times that any country has to strike out on its own. That's natural in the world. But for the most part, we have to be engaged in it and with other countries and with other regional institutions to be successful.

So I would submit that that's a fifth challenge for our two governments. Can we strengthen APEC? Can we strengthen the ASEAN Regional Forum in this part of the world? Can we rebuild the United Nations and make it stronger for the enormous challenges that we all face?

So I wanted to submit those thoughts to you, Alan, and say again how grateful I am for the invitation and to say to this group of people how impressed I am by this country and how I have absolute confidence that the alliance between us is going to be maintained. And the relationship between the new Australian government and our American government is going to be a very good one, a positive one, for the months and years ahead.

Thank you very much. (Applause.)

**QUESTION:** Nicholas May (ph). Ambassador, just looking into the future, the next 12 months and the few months after that, what chances -- for this current administration it seems, Chuck Hagel's call for dialogue, not so much negotiations with Iran, but a dialogue, with this administration seems to be remote. What chances would the next administration, whether it be Democrat or Republican, what are the chances that they would entertain dialogue with Iran?

**UNDER SECRETARY BURNS:** Thank you very much. Nicholas you said, right?

**QUESTION:** Yes.

**UNDER SECRETARY BURNS:** Happy name day. (Laughter.) It's St. Nicholas day.

You know, I'm a professional diplomat. I'm a career diplomat, so we serve all the governments elected by the American people and the last thing I should do is try to look ahead and predict what some government elected in our country in November 2008 will do, because I have no idea who is going to win our elections.

I can just talk about our government and very respectfully disagree with what you suggest that there is no hope for dialogue between the current government and the Iranian government. Actually, the facts are that for the past 18 months, we have offered a negotiation.

On June 1, 2006, the P5 countries and Germany, there's six of us, got together in Vienna. We issued a document which we -- Javier Solana then delivered to Ali Larijani, then head of the National Security Council of Iran. That document said the following: We would like to negotiate, we the six countries, with Iran. We would like to offer to help you construct in Iran a civil nuclear power system if you're interested in civil nuclear power and electricity production.

The core of this was a Russian idea proposed by President Putin.

We will not give you access to the sensitive parts of the fuel cycle, enrichment, reprocessing. We will ship in nuclear fuel and ship out spent fuel. All of us agreed on that, including Russia and China.

If you agree to meet us on that basis, you just have to do one thing. Suspend for the life of the negotiations your enrichment program at Natanz. And we will suspend the U.N. sanctions against you. And we offered a number of other economic inducements including some relaxation of the American economic sanctions against Iran.

Iran turned down that offer to negotiate in June of 2006 and September 2006 when we reaffirmed it. And just last Friday when Javier Solana met the new Iranian nuclear negotiator, Saeed Jalili, in London. Secretary Rice has said this week and I can reconfirm today that we want to get to the negotiating table with Iran. She has said that she will be the first American Secretary of State since 1979 to have a substantial conversation with them, she would lead the American effort, and that any issue could be on the table.

So this widespread notion somehow that the United States is resistant to the idea that you should talk to Iran is actually false. But because we didn't want Iran to continue with its enrichment and reprocessing activities while we negotiated, we insisted, agreed to by China, Russia, Britain, France and Germany -- still agreed to today -- that they should suspend those efforts.

Secondly, we have established a channel to the Iranians in Baghdad. One of our senior diplomats, Ryan Crocker, our ambassador there, has met several times with the Iranian ambassador to Iraq. And I expect that channel to continue to be open and to function. So we understand that sometimes in the real world you need to talk to your adversaries. That was Yitzhak Rabin's famous maxim. You know, you don't negotiate with your best friends; you normally negotiate with people you may not like very much on issues like this.

We're open to it, but not at any price. And we've seen absolutely no willingness on the part of the Iranian government to meet the P5 half way on that. And that's why we continue the efforts to try to achieve a third sanctions resolution. But our vast preference is to sit down at the negotiating table if the Iranians can manage that.

So I just wanted to take issue with just part of what I thought to be behind your very good question.

**QUESTION:** Ambassador, my name is (inaudible). I have a question relating to the internal processes of the U.S. government, particularly between State and Defense.

There has been a perception that has been in the media that after the success in the Iran -- sorry, the Iraqi, I beg your pardon, military processes that was in somewhat of a vacuum. But that more recently there is close collaboration between Defense and State. And I wondered if you would be kind enough to enlarge on how that works and how we might expect it to work in the future.

**UNDER SECRETARY BURNS:** Thank you very much. I mean, I think all governments, you know, you have relations among ministries and sometimes they're excellent and sometimes they're not so excellent. I'm happy to say that in the last few years, we've had a very close collaboration between the State Department where I work and the Defense Department. Secretary Gates and Secretary Rice are personal friends, which makes a difference. Secretary Gates was Deputy National Security Advisor at a time when Secretary Rice and I, 17 years ago, were the two-person Soviet team on the NSC staff for President George H. W. Bush. So he is someone that all of us at the State Department -- he, Secretary Gates -- respect enormously.

And, you know, you can't have, in a country like ours, a fully effective and functioning foreign policy if the diplomats and the soldiers are not speaking together and working together. And whether it's Hans Morgenthau or George Kennan or any of the foreign policy theorists, or Henry Kissinger, you can think of, at least in our country, we know that the combination of force and diplomacy, or the threat of force and diplomacy, or defense and diplomacy is indispensable to success in any country's foreign policy. And so I think we've had very good cooperation between the two departments and I know that's going to continue.

To give you a case in point, the meeting in Edinburgh next week is actually quite important. The defense ministers of the nine regional command south countries, countries in the south and east, are going to be meeting in Edinburgh chaired by the British. But the defense ministers wanted foreign policy people with them so the political directors, I'm the American political director, will be there from each country to provide support to the defense ministers and advice to them.

And it is that kind of integrated effort which is indispensable in a place like Afghanistan, where you have this very well crafted military effort, our two countries are involved in it, ISAF, and you have probably a less effective civilian effort frankly right now. And what we want to do, what we the United States want to do is to help strengthen the U.N. effort so that on the civilian economic, humanitarian, rebuilding, restructuring side you have the unity of purpose and strategic vision that is clearly there on the military side.

So I hope that answers your question.

And before we go to the next question, I was very much remiss in not paying tribute to the American consul general in Sydney, Judith Fergin, and I have been her guest over the last 24 hours and I just wanted to say how much we appreciate everything she's doing.

**QUESTION:** Tom Morton (ph) from ABC Radio National.

Ambassador, you mentioned India and the importance of the global strategic partnership with India. One area where there is a clear difference between the incoming government and the Howard government has been over the U.S.-India nuclear agreement. Mr. Rudd indicated when he was in opposition that Australia would not sell uranium to India and that a Rudd government wouldn't support any exemption or exception for India within the Nuclear Suppliers Group.

Did you discuss the U.S.-India nuclear agreement with Mr. Rudd? And did you seek to persuade him that Australia should change its position on that?

**UNDER SECRETARY BURNS:** Thank you very much. Well, let me just say since I've been through a few transitions in my career in Washington, I'm enormously sympathetic to the fact that the Rudd government's been in power for exactly four days -- (laughter) -- and so, I've tried to be unremittingly positive and not to try to give public advice to the new government. I think that would be wrong of me to waltz in here and try to do that, when they really need some time to establish what they want to do in the world.

But I think that Australia and the United States, my perception, is both of us realize the strategic importance of India. Both of us want to have stronger relations with India. And I would just do one thing in terms of answering your question, I guess I'd separate two issues. Whether or not a country sells uranium to India, that's a sovereign decision that is not really, I think, germane to international discussion. That's for my country to decide whether we choose to do that -- and we have not done that -- or whether your country decides to that.

Another separate matter is this U.S.-India Civil Nuclear Agreement. I have been to India eight times negotiating this over the last two and half years. And we're right now at the cusp of victory, success. The Indian Government is negotiating with the International Atomic Energy Agency a safeguards agreement as we speak. Should that be successful and I think it will, and should the Indian Government choose to go forward with it and I hope it will, then we'll go to the Nuclear Suppliers Group, the 45 countries that need to decide by consensus whether or not to give India the same right to import nuclear fuel, have international support in constructing nuclear power reactors in the future. And we think that's a good idea and that's the basis of the American-India agreement. And there'll be a final vote in U.S. Congress. So we are looking for international support for that agreement in the Nuclear Suppliers Group and I look -- we'll look forward to good discussions with the Australian Government and we hope to be able to work through these issues in the period ahead and it's a major American priority. And I think there's every reason to believe we should have a good conversation about this and hopefully a good outcome.

**QUESTION:** Alan Johnston (ph) from the *International Herald Tribune*. Just returning to Iran briefly, did the publication of the National Intelligence Estimate change your stance at all on Iran and the negotiations that are ongoing at the moment? And a second one, if I may, did you discuss in your conversations in Canberra anything about the U.S. military presence in Australia and its enhancements or perhaps diminution?

**UNDER SECRETARY BURNS:** Thank you very much. On the second question, I did not have any discussions about the U.S. military presence in Australia, no. I represent the Department of State and normally leave to the Department of Defense issues like that. On the first question, I'm glad you asked it because I've been reading -- I was reading on my Blackberry last night, you know, all the volumes of reports that have come out from the press around the world on this Iran issue at the NIE. I mean, the most important thing I can tell you is that the entire UN effort on Iran, the Security Council effort over the last two years, has not been focused on nuclear weapons program in Iran. It's been focused on the enrichment and reprocessing program. And both the Security Council and its resolutions of July '06, December '06, March '07, the last two Chapter 7 sanctions resolutions, and the IAEA in their September '05 and February '06 Board of Governors decisions, have said to the Iranians, the Security Council and the International Atomic Energy Agency, we do not want you, Iran, to reprocess and enrich uranium. That's all the countries you can think of. India has said that, Brazil said it, Egypt said it, South Africa, the Perm 5 countries, your country, Japan. We want you to suspend your efforts to enrich and reprocess uranium at your plant at Natanz. Should you not do that, this is the Security Council sanctions resolutions, one passed unanimously and won 14-1, we will sanction you.

So the NIE report this week said Iran is continuing the enrichment program. ElBaradei says that and the Iranians say it. They boast about it. So there really is no argument that we have to continue the UN sanctions process and we have to continue to, in essence, drive up the cost of the Iranians economically of what they're doing in the hope that they'll respond by negotiating.

And I've seen a number of press reports, not from the *International Herald Tribune*. This week they kind of confused these two issues and say, well, if there's -- if the United States is saying that the weapons program was stopped in 2003, well, why don't we just then suspend all this international (inaudible) in Iran. That's because the entire UN effort's been focused not on the weapons programs, but the enrichment program, which the Iranians admit has been accelerated. So there's every reason to continue this. And we're looking forward to getting that resolution to New York as quickly as possible.

**QUESTION:** Lee Syles (ph) from the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. I wanted to ask you about public diplomacy, because a number of polls have shown that America's image has suffered around the world post-9/11 and particularly post-Iraq. If the U.S. is a product the marketing department would be looking at trying to revive the brand. And I'm just wondering if the State Department is doing similar sort of work. And if so, what sort of innovations are you looking at, particularly in this internet age?

**UNDER SECRETARY BURNS:** Thanks very much. Yeah, we've had a major effort underway both in the Clinton Administration and the Bush Administration to convince all of us who work for the U.S. Government that at least part of our job should be doing things like today what I'm doing here, and that is getting out and speaking to people and representing our country and trying to answer questions and present views, counter stereotypes that we think are unfair about our society or our government.

And so I think diplomacy has changed in one fundamental respect since Judith and I entered the Foreign Service. When I entered in 1980, you know, diplomacy was still kind of a backroom, closed, non-transparent, game. And now it's -- with the 24-hour news cycle, with CNN International, with ABC in Australia and with the internet -- especially the internet -- it's very much a public exercise as well as a private one and we know that we have to compete in the world of ideas and we have to explain ourselves and we have to answer questions of the type that you're asking me today. So we're putting much more resources -- we're putting a much greater emphasis on that than we did.

We have a blog. We just started in September, a State Department blog, where, you know, people write in to us on the internet and they tell us what they think of what we're doing and we just write back. And we have a conversation with people all over the world and it's really interesting to get messages from people in Iran or North Korea or other places. And we didn't have that type of communication 30 years ago when I started as a diplomat. So it's -- I think all governments are doing this.

I'll just say a word about the premise of your question about anti-Americanism. No question, that in large parts of the Muslim world, the Arab world, parts of Europe, the levels of public support, publicly expressed support and opinion polls for the U.S. have declined. Some of that started happening in the last Administration and a lot of it has continued as we've gone through this extraordinarily difficult time. We intervened in Iraq. We thought that was the right thing to do and we still think so. The intervention in Afghanistan and all the other complicating aspects of the war on -- of the struggle against terrorist groups. But I would say this. I think you have to look at various parts of the world to look at levels of support for the United States, Sub-Saharan Africa, for instance, where in large part, the United States is very well thought of. India, soon to be the largest country in the world by population where the rates of public support for our government and the United States are quite strong. So I think you need to distinguish region by region the problem, but we are concerned about it. And any democratic country wants to have some measure of public acceptance and so we do try to work very hard to communicate and to represent ourselves in the best way that we can.

**QUESTION:** Ingrid Lane (ph). You might not be aware, but earlier this year, the head of the Australian federal police described climate change as the biggest security threat to Australia. I won't ask you to comment on the Australian situation, but I'd be very much interested in your views with regards to America and where do you see climate change sitting as a security threat to America?

**UNDER SECRETARY BURNS:** Thank you. My own personal assessment is that climate change is one of the greatest challenges that we all face on the planet. And America is a very environmentally conscience country. The American people since the '70s, our Clean Air Act in the '60s and the Clean Water Act in the '70s, lead-free gasoline, which we introduced a long, long time ago. We've always been environmentally conscious as a people. President Bush attended Ban Ki-moon's Summit on Climate Change in late September. We then hosted three days later our own climate change forum at the State Department. Your country participated in that. We'll have a very strong delegation in Bali. We do not see eye-to-eye with Australia or many other countries on the wisdom of signing the Kyoto regime. That's obvious. But we have -- we do agree that it's a critical question, it's a vital question that we try to agree on a post-Kyoto regime, global regime that will reduce carbon emissions. The key question will be how do you reduce -- what's the best way to stimulate a reduction in carbon emissions? And that's where a lot of the international debate is now focused.

President Bush's Administration has invested several billion dollars a year in U.S. Government money, Department of Energy money, to try to fund hydrogen research, clean coal research. We have a lot of coal in the United States. We burn a lot of coal and it's very dirty, obviously. Biomass, biofuels, wind, solar -- we're doing a lot of research. And at least part of the solution to climate change will have to be technological advancement. And so I think it's going to be a dominant issue for international politics and for life in general in the next several years. It should be an enormously important and critical issue. And I hope that Australians realize that Americans are going to be in there in this struggle. We're going to have a disagreement on some of the tactics, we already do. But I think the important thing is not to demonize each other in the process, not to try to stake out polar positions where you can't compromise and to look for solutions on a pragmatic basis. I think that's what President Bush has been saying, that's what our delegation will say in Bali.

**QUESTION:** Thank you. Ian McPheddren (ph) from News Limited Australia. Given the apparent resurgence of the Taliban in Afghanistan and the upcoming fairly large poppy crop, would you expect the concept of a possible troop surge in that country to be on the table at the meeting in Edinburgh next week?

**UNDER SECRETARY BURNS:** Well, we have not talked about -- at least the United States has not talked about troop surge in Afghanistan, but we have 27,000 American soldiers there. I believe there are around 23,000 other soldiers from a variety of countries. And I know Secretary Gates has been saying since the NATO defense minister's meeting in October, we need more -- we need a greater political commitment from our NATO allies. We need countries to be willing to serve not just in the northern and western parts of the country, but in the south and east where the great majority of fighting is and where the challenge is. We need more helicopters, we need more air support, we need more special forces. And so the NATO Alliance needs to work through these issues. We'll have a summit meeting with our heads of government in Bucharest in the first week in April. This is going to be the dominant issue of that summit. We have no argument with Australia. The Australian Government has made a major commitment of military forces to Afghanistan. You're serving in one of the most difficult places. And your forces, by everybody's account, are serving with great effectiveness. And we know, because we trained with Australia, how good the Australian special forces and their military units are.

So I think next week you're going to see a lot of similarity, I would think, between the U.S. and Australian approach in Edinburgh.

And I felt with Defense Minister Fitzgibbons and with the chief of staff this week, I felt a lot of similarity of views between the new Government of Australia and the United States Government on Afghanistan. Now, the military effort's only part of the equation for success. We need to help Afghanistan to rebuild the infrastructure, build schools, educate girls, let girls go to school, free of intimidation from the Taliban. There's a lot of that going on, the Taliban trying to intimidate parents to keep girls at home, as they did during that regime, to help this -- combat this enormous problem of poppy production and drug trafficking, which is spiraling out of control in Afghanistan. So the challenges are immense. I have a strong sense in leaving Australia that our two governments are heading in exactly the right direction and the same direction and that we Americans needs to call on our European allies to do more and to commit their military forces where they're needed most, in the south and in the east.

(End of Recording)

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