



ATTORNEY-GENERAL
THE HON PHILIP RUDDOCK MP

‘No Better Friend’

American Australian Association

New York

Breakfast, Tuesday, 26 July 2005

Introduction

1. Ladies and Gentlemen.
2. In three weeks time, we – Australia and the United States, and our other wartime allies – will celebrate the 60th anniversary of the end of the War in the Pacific.
3. It was an historic turning point for Australia – it was the first time we had looked towards the United States, rather than to Britain, as our principal ally.
4. Since then we have grown ever closer.
5. As Prime Minister John Howard has said, the United States has ‘no better friend’ than Australia.
6. Ladies and gentleman, I am delighted to join you this morning to discuss the positive future of the bilateral relationship – particularly in the wake of the tragic and terrible events of September 11 – and the shared values which underpin it.

[The Shared Experience of Terrorism]

7. It is true that New York and its people changed on 9-11.
8. But it is also true that the rest of the world changed – the terrorist atrocities were a direct attack not only upon the United States, but on all nations that value freedom and democracy.
9. Although Australians have not endured a terrorist attack directly on home soil, we too have paid a price.
10. Australians died in the Twin Towers, and 88 Australians were killed in the Bali bombings, in a part of Indonesia long regarded as a holiday haven by many young Australians.
11. The Bali attacks changed us, as 9-11 changed you.
12. Now, after Madrid, Istanbul and far too many other places, we have witnessed yet another strike at freedom.

13. The attacks in London on 7 July were simply the latest reminder – if ever we needed one – that the price of freedom is eternal vigilance.
14. The attacks resonated strongly in Australia – particularly in my hometown of Sydney – where flags were flown at half mast.
15. Sydney, too, is a financial capital, with a large commuter population.
Many Sydneysiders have lived and worked in London – a city, which is often the first-port of call for Australians going overseas.
16. Many have friends living or working there now.
17. But far more significant was the sense of solidarity forged by the common values, common bonds and a common history shared by the peoples of Australia, the US and the United Kingdom.

[Out of Britain]

18. Like much of the United States, Australia was settled by immigrants from the UK – voluntarily in the case of the US, in rather less pleasant circumstances in the case of Australia.
19. Over time, our societies and our cultures, our accents – even our cuisines – have evolved quite differently from each other and from the United Kingdom.
20. But the differences of taste and pronunciation that divide us are minor.
21. Of far more importance are those values that underpin our societies, and that define who we are and what we stand for.

22. Values which Britain's great war-time leader, Sir Winston Churchill, has called:

'The great principles of freedom and the rights of man which are the joint inheritance of the English-speaking world and which through Magna Carta, the Bill of Rights, the Habeas Corpus, trial by jury, and the English common law find their most famous expression in the American Declaration of Independence.'

23. These values are the touchstones of our communities.

24. We have adhered to them in war and peace, and have built prosperous, egalitarian, multi-cultural societies around them – societies where everyone has a fair go, and each person is judged on their own merits, rather than according to race, creed or religion.

[Attacked For Our Values]

25. But now we are under attack because of those values by terrorists who have no respect for the rule of law, for democratically elected governments, for innocent civilians, or even for their own followers – who they turn into human bombs in order to make political points.
26. Australia acknowledges the United States as the global leader in the fight against terrorism.
27. No other country has the global reach required, or the resources, to help other countries improve their own capabilities to deal with terrorism.
28. This is a heavy burden your country has shouldered – both in terms of money and lives.

29. I can only adopt the words of Robert Menzies – one of Australia’s greatest Prime Ministers – in an address to Congress in 1955:

‘You have had the privilege and the responsibility of accepting toward other portions of the free world the most remarkable obligations; and to accept those, you have had to exhibit a willingness to place burdens – heavy burdens – on your own people. I am politician enough, after all my years of politics, to know that is not the easiest thing in the world. But you have done it.’

30. At the time, he was talking about the role the US had played in rebuilding Europe, and in taking on the newly emerged threat of communism.

31. But his words are just as relevant now.

32. You have willingly shouldered these new burdens – and we are shouldering ours.

33. Since September 11, we have fought alongside you in the coalition of the willing in the fight against terror.
34. In Afghanistan, we helped remove the Taliban from power and destroy Al-Qa'ida's terrorist bases.
35. In Iraq, much remains to be done – but the signs are positive.
36. So far, three-quarters of Al-Qa'ida's senior leadership has been captured or killed.
And almost 3,500 terrorist operatives and their associates have been detained or killed in more than 100 countries.
37. We are working with you in multilateral fora – such as the Proliferation Security Initiative designed to stop the trafficking of weapons of mass destruction.
38. And we are also taking action independently in our own region – working closely with, and providing support for, our neighbours in South-East Asia and the South Pacific, to help build their capacity to fight

terrorism, and to address the poverty which so often provides terrorists with fertile recruiting grounds.

39. Domestically, we have tightened our laws to make it harder for terror networks to operate in or from Australia, and to ensure that our law enforcement community has the support it needs to get the job done.

40. As Australia – like the US – is a federation, this has been done in cooperation with the States and Territories, the business community and the public, and has included well over 100 distinct security measures at a cost of more than \$5 billion dollars.

[Australia's Phased Response]

41. These measures have been put in place as quickly as possible, but in distinct phases to address the areas of urgent need while building a sustainable and robust future capacity.

42. The first phase was in the immediate aftermath of September 11, when we hardened obvious targets and

- quickly boosted the capability of our various security agencies to detect and prevent acts of terrorism.
43. The second phase involved refining our approach by reviewing what we had achieved and identifying opportunities for greater improvement.
44. This phase necessarily drew the business community and Australia's industrial operations into a stronger engagement, because it included taking steps to protect our critical infrastructure – much of which is in the hands of the private sector.
45. We are now in the third phase – with a level of capability that allows us to make considered decisions about preparing for the long term.
46. But efforts to safeguard our population must always remain, to some degree, an unfinished canvas.
47. Of particular note in this regard is the debate on whether truly effective national security laws can ever be fully compatible with our human and civil rights obligations.

48. While this debate is important, I believe that some protagonists fail to recognise a national government's obligation under Article 3 of the Human Rights Convention – that is, that governments have an obligation to protect human life.

[The Obligation to Protect Human Life]

49. The Australian Government's view of the importance of Article 3 is shared by Canadian Attorney-General and former human rights lawyer, Irwin Cottler, who refers to the concept of "human security".

50. Of course, this is not a new debate.

51. More than 140 years ago, Abraham Lincoln agonised over whether he should have taken pre-emptive action which might have headed-off or shortened the American Civil War.

52. In a letter to Democrats in 1863, Lincoln conceded that the sympathies of many of the rebel generals were well known before the war and that perhaps he could have crippled the “insurgent cause” by arresting them before they actually committed an offence.
53. As he observed in the letter: “I think the time not unlikely to come when I shall be blamed for having made too few arrests rather than too many”.
54. One hundred and forty years on – and the debate is little changed.
55. I don’t want to be the Attorney-General who can be the subject of accusations from grieving relatives that it was in my power to do more to protect their loved ones.
56. I believe the Government is doing everything that should be done to protect the community – and more importantly, what we are doing is right.

57. But there is much more to the bilateral Australian-US relationship than a common goal of ridding the world of terrorism.

[In The Beginning – There Was Trade]

58. The first real ties between our two countries were trade – during Australia’s early years as a British colony foreign trade was almost exclusively with American ships.

59. More than once, American goods saved the early Australian colonists from starvation.

60. Much of the commerce in the early days revolved around hunting whales and seals – but quickly branched into rum-running instead!

61. But perhaps the most unusual merchandise was ice. For a 21-year period in the early days of the colony, all the ice available was imported from the United States.

It wasn’t an easy commodity to ship – almost fifty per cent of the cargo melted en route.

62. Fortunately the merchandise we deal in today is more durable!
63. The United States is now Australia's largest trading partner – with total goods and services trade between our countries worth around \$US 30 billion (\$A40 billion) a year.
64. Your largest export to us is aircraft and parts.
65. Our largest export to you is beef.
But other products like telecommunications equipment have grown strongly.
As has wine.
66. Wine is now our second largest export to this country – worth \$US 675 million (\$A900 million) a year.
A pleasing turn around from the early days when you were smuggling rum to us!
67. And the relationship is set to become even more profitable now that the US-Australia Free Trade Agreement has come into force.

68. This is a comprehensive agreement which will increase bilateral investment and trade, provide more jobs and better living standards for both countries.
69. Independent economic analysis has suggested that the FTA will generate more than \$US4.5 billion (\$A6 billion) in economic benefits, and lead to the creation of over 30,000 jobs.
70. I would urge you to take advantage of the opportunities now on offer and consider investing further in Australia.
71. Australia is an ideal place to do business.
72. We are a stable democracy, with an independent judiciary.
73. Over the last decade our economy has grown strongly.
74. We have:
- low interest rates and low inflation
 - an excellent business infrastructure, and
 - a highly-educated, multi-lingual population.

75. Nearly 900,000 Australians speak an Asian language fluently – and about half of these speak a Chinese dialect.
76. In short – not only is Australia an excellent place to do business, but it is also an excellent base for businesses expanding into the Asia Pacific.
77. And, as the Australians here will tell you, Australia is an easy place in which to live and work.
78. We speak the same language.
79. We enjoy the same entertainment – although we think our code of football and our beer are better, and like the US we are an open, friendly and welcoming society.
80. And that is a major reason why, to return to my earlier theme, we are also targets of the same mad ideology of terror.

[Conclusion]

81. Australians have long memories and make dedicated friends.

The US has been a friend for more than a century – and we will be there by your side in the fight ahead.

82. Together we fought in the War in the Pacific.

That war was brutal – and costly in both human and economic terms.

83. But it was over in less than four years.

84. The war we are engaged in now may not end in my life time.

85. But we will win this war too – just as we did 60 years ago – because of what we are fighting for – the common dignity of human kind – and a set of ideals and values which define our civilisation.

86. Thank you.