



AmericanRhetoric.com

George W. Bush

Address to the Australian Parliament

delivered 22 October 2003, The Australian Parliament House Canberra, Australia



[AUTHENTICITY CERTIFIED: Text version below transcribed directly from audio]

Governor General Michael Jeffery, Prime Minister John Howard, Speaker of the House, Leader of the Senate, Leader of the Opposition Simon Crean, Distinguished Members of the House and the Senate, Premiers, Members of the Diplomatic Corps, ladies and gentlemen:

Laura and I are honored to be in the Commonwealth of Australia. I want to thank the Prime Minister for his invitation. I want to thank the Members and Senators for convening this session of the Parliament. And I want to thank the people of Australia for a gracious welcome.



AmericanRhetoric.com

Five months ago, your Prime Minister was a distinguished visitor of ours in Crawford, Texas, at our ranch. You might remember that I called him a "man of steel." That's Texan for "fair dinkum." Prime Minister John Howard is a leader of exceptional courage, who exemplifies the finest qualities of one of the world's greatest democracies. Proud to call him friend.

Americans know Australia as a land of independent and enterprising and good-hearted people. We see something familiar here, something we like. Australians are fair-minded and tolerant and easy-going. Yet in times of trouble and danger, Australians are the first to step forward, to accept the hard duties, and to fight bravely until the fighting is done.

In a hundred years of experience, American soldiers have come to know the courage and good fellowship of the diggers at their side. We fought together in the Battle of Hamel, together in the Coral Sea, together in New Guinea, on the Korean Peninsula, in Vietnam. And in the war on terror, once again we're at each other's side.

In this war, the Australia and American people have witnessed the methods of the enemy. We saw the scope of their hatred on September the 11th, 2001. We saw the depth of their cruelty on October the 12th, 2002. We saw destruction and grief -- and we saw our duty. As free nations in peril, we must fight this enemy with all our strength.

No country can live -- live peacefully in a world that the terrorists would make for us. And no people are immune from the sudden violence that can come to an office building, or an airplane, or a night club, or a city bus. Your nation and mine have known the shock and felt the sorrow and laid the dead to rest. And we refuse to live our lives at the mercy of murderers.

The nature of the terrorist threat defines the strategy we are using to -- to fight it. These committed killers will not be stopped by negotiations. They will not respond to reason. The terrorists cannot be appeased. They must be found; they must be fought; and they must be defeated.



AmericanRhetoric.com

The terrorists hide and strike within free societies, so we're draining their funds, disrupting their plans, finding their leaders. The skilled work of Thai and Indonesia and other authorities in capturing the terrorist Hambali -- suspected of planning the murders in Bali and other attacks -- was a model of the determined campaign we are waging.

The terrorists seek safe harbor to plot and to train -- so we're holding the allies of terror to account. America, Australia, and other nations acted in Afghanistan to destroy the home base of al-Qaeda and rid that country of a terror regime. And the Afghan people, especially Afghan women, do not miss the bullying and the beatings and the public executions at the hands of the Taliban.

The terrorists hope to gain chemical, biological, or nuclear weapons -- the means to match their hatred, so we're confronting outlaw regimes that aid terrorists, that pursue weapons of mass destruction, and that defy the demands of the world. America, Australia, and other nations acted in Iraq to remove a grave and gathering danger, instead of wishing and waiting while tragedy drew closer.

Since the liberation of Iraq, we have discovered Saddam's clandestine network of biological laboratories, the design work on prohibited long-range missiles, his elaborate campaign to hide illegal weapons programs. Saddam Hussein spent years frustrating U.N. inspections for a simple reason -- because he was violating U.N. demands. And in the end, rather than surrender his programs and abandon his lies, he chose defiance, and his own undoing.

Who can possibly think that the world would be better off with Saddam Hussein still in power? Surely not the dissidents who would be in his prisons, or end up in his mass graves; surely not the men and women who would fill Saddam's torture chambers and rape rooms; surely not the families of the victims he murdered with poison gas; surely not anyone who cares about human rights and democracy and stability in the Middle East. Today, Saddam's regime is gone, and no one -- [audience interruption]



AmericanRhetoric.com

Speaker Andrew: Senator Brown, I warn you -- Senator Brown will excuse himself from the House. Senator Brown will excuse himself from the House. The Sergeant will remove Senator Brown from the House.

President Bush: Surely no one --

Speaker Andrew: Mr. President --

President Bush: -- who cares about human rights and democracy and stability in the Middle East. Today Saddam Hussein's regime is gone, and no one should mourn its passing.

In the months leading up to our action in Iraq, Australia and America went to the United Nations. We are committed to multilateral institutions because global threats require a global response. We're committed to collective security, and collective security requires more than solemn discussions and sternly worded pronouncements. It requires collective will. If the resolutions of the world are to be more than ink on paper, they must be enforced. If the institutions of the world are to be more than debating societies, they must eventually act. If the world promises serious consequences for the defiance of the lawless, then serious consequences must follow.

Because we enforced Resolution 1441, and used force in Iraq as a last resort, there is one more free nation in the world -- and all free nations are more secure.

We accepted our obligations with open eyes, mindful of the sacrifices that had been made, and those to come. The burdens fall most heavily on the men and women of our Armed Forces and their families. The world has seen the bravery and skill of the Australian military. Your Special Operations forces were among the first units on the ground in Iraq. And in Afghanistan the first casualty among America's allies was Australian: Special Air Service Sergeant Andrew Russell. This afternoon I will lay a wreath at the Australian War Memorial, in memory of Sergeant Russell, and the long line of Australians who have died in the service to this nation. And my nation honors their service to the cause of freedom, to the cause we share.



AmericanRhetoric.com

Members and Senators, with decisive victories behind us, we have decisive days ahead. We cannot let up on our offensive against terror, even a bit. And we must continue to build stability and peace in the Middle East and Asia as the alternatives to hatred and fear.

We seek the rise of freedom and self-government in Afghanistan and in Iraq for the benefit of their people, as an example to their neighbors, and for the security of the world. America and Australia are helping the people of both those nations to defend themselves, to build the institutions of law and democracy, and to establish the beginnings of free enterprise.

These are difficult tasks in civil societies wrecked by years of tyranny. And it should surprise no one that the remnants and advocates of tyranny should fight liberty's advance. The advance of liberty will not be halted. The terrorists and the Taliban and Saddam holdouts are desperately trying to stop our progress. They will fail. The people of Afghanistan and Iraq measure progress every day. They are losing the habits of fear, and they are gaining the habits of freedom.

Some are skeptical about the prospects for democracy in the Middle East, and wonder if its culture can support free institutions. In fact, freedom has always had its skeptics. Some doubted that Japan and other Asian countries could ever adopt the ways of self-government. The same doubts have been heard at various times about Germans and Africans. At the time of the Magna Cart[a], the English were not considered the most promising recruits for democracy. And to be honest, sophisticated observers had serious reservations about the scruffy travelers who founded our two countries. Every milestone of liberty was considered impossible before it was achieved. In our time, we must decide our own belief: Either freedom is the privilege of an elite few, or it is the right and capacity of all humanity.

By serving our ideals, we also serve our interests. If the Middle East remains a place of anger and hopelessness and incitement, this world will tend toward division and chaos and violence. Only the spread of freedom and hope in the Middle East in the long-term will bring peace to that region and beyond. And the liberation of more than 50 million Iraqis and Afghans from tyranny is progress to be proud of.



AmericanRhetoric.com

Our nations must also confront the immediate threat of proliferation. We cannot allow the growing ties of trade and the forces of globalization to be used for the secret transport of lethal materials. So our two countries are joining together in the Proliferation Security Initiative. We're preparing to search planes and ships and trains and trucks carrying suspect[ed] cargo, to seize weapons or missile shipments that raise proliferation concerns. Last month, Australia hosted the first maritime interdiction exercise in the Coral Sea.

Australia and the United States are also keeping pressure on Iran to conform to its letter and spirit of the nonproliferation obligations. We're working together to convince North Korea that the continued pursuit of nuclear weapons will bring only further isolation. The wrong weapons, the wrong technology in the wrong hands has never been so great a danger -- and we are meeting that danger together.

Our nations have a special responsibility throughout the Pacific to help keep the peace, to ensure the free movement of people and capital and information, and advance the ideals of democracy and freedom. America will continue to maintain a forward presence in Asia, continue to work closely with Australia.

Today, America and Australia are working with Japan and the Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia, and Singapore, and other nations to expand trade and to fight terror, to keep the peace -- the peace in the Taiwan Straits.

Your country is hosting President Hu Jintao. Australia's agenda with China is the same as my country's. We're encouraged by China's cooperation in the war on terror. We're working with China to ensure the Korean Peninsula is free of nuclear weapons. We see[k] a China that is stable and prosperous -- a nation that respects the peace of its neighbors and works to secure the freedom of its own people.

Security in the Asia Pacific region will always depend on the willingness of nations to take responsibility for their neighborhood, as Australia is doing. Your service and your sacrifice helped to establish a new government and a new nation in East Timor.



AmericanRhetoric.com

And working with New Zealand and other Pacific island states, you're helping the Solomon Islands reestablish order and build a just government. By your principled actions, Australia is leading the way to peace in Southeast Asia -- and America is grateful.

Together -- [audience interruption]

Together my country -- Together my country, with Australia, is promoting greater economic opportunity. Our nations are now working to complete a U.S.-Australia Free Trade Agreement that will add momentum to the free trade throughout the Asia Pacific region, while producing jobs in our own countries.

[audience interruption]

President Bush: We must know firsthand --

Speaker Andrew: Senator Nettle will resume her seat. Sergeant, remove Senator Nettle. Senator Nettle will resume her seat. The President has the call. Senator Nettle is warned. The Sergeant will remove Senator Nettle --

President Bush: I love free speech.

The relationship between America and Australia is vibrant and vital. Together, we will meet the challenges and the perils of our own time. In the desperate hours of another time, when the Philippines were on the verge of falling and your country faced the prospect of invasion, General Douglas MacArthur addressed members of the Australian Parliament.¹ He spoke of a code that unites our two nations -- the code of free people, which, he said, "embraces the things that are right, and condemns the things that are wrong."

More than 60 year[s] later, that code still guides us. We call evil by its name, and stand for freedom that leads to peace. Our alliance is strong. We value, more than ever, the unbroken friendship between the Australian and the American peoples.



AmericanRhetoric.com

My country is grateful to you, and to all the Australian people, for your clear vision and for your strength of heart. And I thank you for your hospitality.

May God bless you all.

¹ From Wikimedia: "If [MacArthur] addressed the secret joint sittings, this was not officially recorded. However, General MacArthur was provided with a seat on the floor of the House of Representatives on 26 March 1942, and addressed members of Parliament from outside the chamber later that day."