

One man who served aboard the original *Canberra* was Lieutenant Mackenzie Gregory, and we're greatly honored to have him with us today. Where is Mr. Gregory? Thank you for being here, sir. We're honored to have you. You must have been a young guy. [Laughter]

President Roosevelt knew a trustworthy ally when he saw one. Every President since then has felt and known the same esteem for Australia.

Mr. Prime Minister, it was one of your own predecessors, a wartime leader, who captured the spirit that has always made us natural allies. "We work for the same kind of free world," observed Sir Robert Gordon Menzies. "We govern ourselves in democracy, and we will not tolerate anything less. We cherish liberty and hold it safe, providing hope for the rest of the world."

In the century just passed, Australians served side by side with Americans in every major military commitment. In peaceful times like our own, the alliance between our two nations has helped spare the world from other wars and dangers. Australia is a strong and peaceful presence in East Asia and the Pacific.

Australia is a generous land, mindful of the struggles of poorer nations, always helping when and where it can. Your Government and your good people are an example of democracy, individual liberty, and the virtues of free trade amongst all nations.

On this official visit to our country, I know that you will meet with nothing but good will. And in meetings with Congress and my administration, you will find willing partners who understand Australia's importance as a strategic and economic ally. Though half a world apart, we belong to a very close community of values and aspirations.

From this visit, Mr. Prime Minister, I hope that you will take away renewed optimism about our shared future. And I know that you will take with you a parcel weighing approximately 250 pounds. [Laughter] It's a fine bell with a great history. And once you get it home, it will always stand as a sign of the unbounded respect of our Nation for the Australian people.

Welcome to America. May God bless Australia, and may God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:45 a.m. in Leutze Park at the Historical Washington Navy Yard. In his remarks, he referred to Janette Howard, wife of Prime Minister Howard; Adm. Vernon E. Clark, USN, Chief of Naval Operations; and Rear Adm. Christopher E. Weaver, USN, Commandant, Naval District of Washington. The President also referred to ANZUS, the Security Treaty Between Australia, New Zealand, and the United States of America. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Prime Minister Howard.

Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With Prime Minister John Howard of Australia *September 10, 2001*

Q. Mr. President, can you tell us your thoughts, sir, on more tax cuts?

The President. I'm honored the Prime Minister is here. He's a great friend. Australia's a great friend, and we're so honored

he's here. I'm sure we'll have a good, constructive visit. And we've had a great start.

Q. Mr. President, what's your message on education today? Do you have anything to say about education today, Mr. President?

The President. In Florida.

NOTE: The exchange began at 10:10 a.m. in the West Wing Lobby Entrance at the White

House, upon the President's return from the Historical Washington Navy Yard. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Exchange With Reporters Following Discussions With Prime Minister
John Howard of Australia
September 10, 2001

Australia-U.S. Free Trade Agreement

Q. Mr. President, how do you feel about a free trade agreement with Australia?

President Bush. We've had a good discussion about it.

Q. Progress, sir?

President Bush. I think we've made some good progress; you bet. I appreciate the Prime Minister being here. Australia is a great friend to the United States, and it's an honor to welcome him and the delegation here.

Q. Does the agreement still have to wait until after the FDA here?

President Bush. We're making good progress. He's certainly making a good case.

Legislative Agenda

Q. Mr. President, if you had to choose between education and your tax cut, which would you choose?

President Bush. I'm going to Florida today—

Q. Have fun.

President Bush. —to talk about education.

I hope the Australian press is kinder to you than the American press is to me.

Bush-Howard Discussions

Q. How have you found the discussions—

Prime Minister Howard. Dennis? You heard that, Dennis?

Q. Yes?

Prime Minister Howard. You just listen to the man. He speaks great common sense. [Laughter]

Q. Mr. Howard, how have you found the discussions so far with Mr. Bush?

Prime Minister Howard. Very good. I mean, we are very close friends. We covered just about everything you could cover in the time. We're going to continue over lunch to talk about some of the regional issues. And it's a great opportunity to reinforce what a deep friendship it is. And the President and I have a great similarity of views on many issues, and it's a great experience to be able to exchange them with somebody who holds the views he does.

Q. Have you provided an update on the—

Prime Minister Howard. I can't hear you; I'm sorry.

Q. Have you provided an update on the HMAS *Manoora* at all?

Prime Minister Howard. Haven't discussed it.

U.S. Open Tennis Tournament

Q. Mr. President, do you congratulate Lleyton Hewitt for winning the U.S. Open?

President Bush. Yes, I do. Man, you talk about a guy who can play tennis. He was—clearly tennis is one of Australia's best exports.

By the way, now that you're here, I do want to say hello to my old friend John Newcombe. I knew him years ago; he represents the best of Australia. And by the way, we get along well, because if there's