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THURSDAY, 23 OCTOBER

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At 11.15 a.m.

The SPEAKER (Mr Neil Andrew) and the President of the Senate (Senator the Hon. Paul Calvert) were announced by the Serjeant-at-Arms, and entered the chamber.

The SPEAKER took the chair and read prayers.

WELCOME TO SENATORS

The SPEAKER—Allow me, on behalf of the House, to extend a particular welcome to the President of the Senate and honourable senators to this meeting of the House of Representatives and the Senate in this chamber to hear the address by the President of the United States of America, the Honourable George W. Bush.

ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

The Honourable George Walker Bush having been announced and escorted into the chamber—

The SPEAKER—Mr President, I welcome you to the House of Representatives chamber. Your address today to members and senators is indeed a significant occasion in the history of our federal parliament. I would like to welcome Mrs Laura Bush, who is in the gallery this morning. I would also like to acknowledge Dr Condoleezza Rice, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, and other senior officials from the United States who are in the gallery. On behalf of the parliament, I extend a very warm welcome to our visitors.

Mr HOWARD (Bennelong—Prime Minister) (11.20 a.m.)—Mr Speaker and Mr President of the Senate, today we welcome a man, we honour an office, we recommit to an alliance and we declare that, above all of those things, common values between nations unite nations and peoples more than individuals or institutions. The things that unite the Australian and American people are shared values: the belief that the individual is more important than the state, that strong families are a nation’s greatest asset, that competitive free enterprise is the ultimate foundation of national wealth, and that the worth of a person is determined by that person’s character and hard work, not by their religion or race or colour or creed or social background.

Our two nations—that is, the United States and Australia—have fought in defence of those values, beginning appropriately enough on 4 July 1918 in the Battle of Hamel, when on America’s national day Australians and Americans first fought together but, I might note, under the command of an Australian, Sir John Monash. On subsequent occasions we have also fought in defence of our common values. I know that I speak for every Australian at this gathering today in saying that we will never forget the vital help extended to us in World War II in the Battle of the Coral Sea and on other occasions. That United States intervention stood between us and potential military conquest. It is something that the Australian people, whatever their different views may be on other issues, will never forget.

The President of the United States and I first met face to face on 10 September 2001. As we celebrated at the naval dockyard in Washington the shared partnership of the ANZUS alliance neither of us knew what lay ahead. The next day the world did change, and we saw arising out of those events the character and the strength and the leadership of the man we welcome today. George Bush, the 43rd President of the United States, rallied his own people and the people of the world in the fight against terrorism. He reminded us then, as we should be reminded today, that terrorists oppose nations such as the United States and Australia not because
of what we have done but because of who we are and because of the values that we hold in common, and that terrorism—and we should remind ourselves of this again and again—is as much the enemy of Islam as it is the enemy of Judaism orChristianity.

This is a robust parliament. It has seen debates and divisions of view on issues. We had a divided view in this nation on the question of our participation in Iraq. Let me say on behalf of the government that we believe the right decision was taken; we believe Australia was right to join the United States. And I know that all Australians believe that the people of Iraq are better off without that loathsome dictator, Saddam Hussein.

I have spoken briefly of the past and the present, but we share an even greater future. The significance of America to Australia will grow as the years go by; it will not diminish. That is one of the driving forces behind our commitment to a free trade agreement. The contribution of the United States to regional stability and the partnership it will forge with our other friends in the region such as China and Japan will be increasingly important to our nation. For those and many other reasons—as a friend, as an individual and, very importantly, as a standard-bearer for the values that we hold in common—I have great pleasure, Mr Speaker and Mr President of the Senate, on behalf of the government, in welcoming George Bush, the 43rd President of the United States of America.

Mr CREAN (Hotham—Leader of the Opposition) (11.25 a.m.)—Mr President, I join with the Prime Minister in extending the warmest of welcomes to you and Mrs Bush. It is a pleasure to have you in our country. We are especially pleased that you have come to this country following the meeting of APEC, because it is a source of great pride that a great former Prime Minister of this country, Bob Hawke, was instrumental not only in getting APEC going but also in insisting that, for it to be effective, the United States needed to be involved.

Your presence today reminds us all that the partnership between our two great nations is broad, deep and many sided. It is long standing and, in its fundamentals, it is bipartisan. It is, above all, a partnership of peoples. It is something beyond political parties and beyond administrations. More than 60 years ago another great Labor Prime Minister, John Curtin, and a great American President, Franklin Roosevelt, forged that partnership together in the crucible of World War II. Curtin famously wrote in December 1941:

... Australia looks to America, free of any pangs as to our traditional links or kinship with the United Kingdom.

It is altogether fitting today that we should reaffirm that alliance in a world of rapid change. But the Australia of 1941 has been transformed, as Australia’s standing in the world has been transformed. We now also look to the future in our own region, as both a good friend and a good neighbour among the nations of Asia and the Pacific. We also look to our future in terms of our deep and enduring support for the United Nations and the principles of the United Nations Charter—as we did in East Timor. Above all, Australia looks to itself; to the self-reliance of a proud, a free, a strong and an independent people.

The Australian perspective is bound to differ from time to time from the perspective of the United States. Of course, on occasions, friends do disagree—as we did, on this side, with you on the war in Iraq. But such is the strength of our shared values, our interests and our principles that those differences can enrich rather than diminish, can strengthen rather than weaken, the partnership. Our commitment to the alliance remains unshak-
able, as does our commitment to the war on terror. But friends must be honest with each other. Honesty is, after all, the foundation stone of that great Australian value, mate-
ship.

Mr President, the world has changed, but there remains an essential truth in Prime Minister Curtin’s words of 62 years ago: Australia still looks to America. That is a truth not just for Australia but for democracies everywhere. It is a profound, historical truth which derives its power not from the might of America but from the democratic promise upon which America was brought forth, conceived and dedicated 227 years ago. The equal rights of all nations, respect for the opinions of all peoples and the idea that all men are created equal: these principles, taken together, form the true and imperishable basis of the promise of, and the friendship between, our two great nations. May they never perish from the face of the earth.

The SPEAKER—Mr President, it is a pleasure and an honour for me to invite you to address assembled members and senators.

Members and senators rising and applauding—

The HONOURABLE GEORGE WALKER BUSH—Governor-General Michael Jeffery, Prime Minister John Howard, Speaker of the House, President 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 honoured to be in the Commonwealth of Australia. I want to thank the Prime Minister for his invitation, I want to thank members and senators for convening this session of the parliament and I want to thank the people of Australia for a gracious welcome.

Some five months ago your Prime Minis-
ter was a distinguished visitor to our ranch in Crawford, Texas. You might remember that I called him a man of steel. That is 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. I am proud to call him ‘friend’.

Americans know Australia is 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 easygoing, 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 100 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, in the Coral Sea, in New Guinea, on the Korean Peninsula and in Vietnam. And, in the war on terror, once again we are at each other’s side.

In this war, the Australian and American people have witnessed the methods of the enemy. We saw the scope of their hatred on September 11 2001. We saw the depth of their cruelty on October 12 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 could live peacefully in the world that the terrorists would make for us. No people are immune from the sudden violence that can come to an office building or an aeroplane or a nightclub 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 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. The terrorists hide and strike within free societies, so we are draining their funds, disrupting their plans and finding their leaders.

The skilled work of Thai, Indonesian 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 harbour to plot and to train, so we are 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 the Afghan women, do not miss the bullying, 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 are 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 and his elaborate campaign to hide illegal weapons programs. Saddam Hussein spent years frustrating the UN inspectors for a simple reason: because he was violating UN 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, democracy and stability in the Middle East. Today, Saddam’s regime is gone, and no-one—

Senator Brown interjecting—

The SPEAKER—Senator Brown, I warn you.

Senator Brown interjecting—

The SPEAKER—Senator Brown will excuse himself from the House. The serjeant will remove Senator Brown from the House.

The HONOURABLE GEORGE WALKER BUSH—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 are committed to collective security, and collective security requires more than solemn discussions and sternly worded pronouncements. It requires collective will. 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 Austra-
lian 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 service to this nation. My nation honours their service to the cause of freedom, to the cause we share.

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. 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 neighbours 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 racked by years of tyranny. 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 in the Taliban and Saddam hold-outs 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 sceptical 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 sceptics. 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 Carta, the English were not considered the most promising recruits for democracy. To be honest, sophisticated observers had serious reservations about the scruffy travellers 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. The liberation of more than 50 million Iraqis and Afghans from tyranny is progress to be proud of.

Our nations must also confront the immediate threat of proliferation. We cannot allow the growing ties of trade and the forces of globalisation to be used for the secret transport of lethal materials. So our two countries are joining together in the Proliferation Security Initiative. We are preparing to search planes, ships, trains and trucks carrying suspect 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 the letter and the spirit of its non-proliferation obligations. We are 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, have 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, capital and information, and to advance the ideals of democracy and freedom. America will continue to maintain a foreign presence in Asia and continue to work closely with Australia. Today America and Australia are working with Japan, the Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia, Singapore and other nations to expand trade and to fight terror—to keep the peace, including 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 are encouraged by China’s cooperation in the war on terror. We are working with China to ensure the Korean Peninsula is free of nuclear weapons. We see a China that is stable and prosperous, a nation that respects the peace of its neighbours 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 neighbourhood, as Australia is doing.

Your service and your sacrifice helped to establish a new government and a new nation in East Timor. In working with New Zealand and other Pacific island states you are helping Solomon Islands re-establish order and build a just government. By your principled actions Australia is leading the way to peace in South-East Asia, and America is grateful. Together my country, with Australia, is promoting greater economic opportunity. Our nations are now working to complete a US-Australia free trade agreement that will add momentum to free trade throughout the Asia-Pacific region while producing jobs in our own countries.

The SPEAKER—Senator Nettle is warned.

Senator Nettle interjecting—

The SPEAKER—The serjeant will remove Senator Nettle. The President has the call.

The HONOURABLE GEORGE WALKER 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 was on the verge of falling and your country faced the prospect of invasion, General Douglas MacArthur addressed members of the Australian parliament. 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 years later, that code still guides us. We call evil by its name. We 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. 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.

Members and senators rising and applauding, the Honourable George Walker Bush left the chamber.

The SPEAKER—Order! On behalf of all senators and members, I extend to the President our thanks for his address, and wish him and Mrs Bush a very pleasant and successful time here in Australia.

Before I adjourn the House, all senators and members will be well aware that under the standing orders both Senators Brown and Nettle leave me no choice but to name them, having defied the chair. Senators Brown and Nettle are therefore named.
Mr ABBOTT (Warringah—Leader of the House) (11.54 a.m.)—I move:

That Senators Brown and Nettle be suspended from the service of the House.

Question agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

The SPEAKER—I thank members and senators for their attendance. The House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. I hereby declare this meeting of the House of Representatives and the Senate concluded.

House adjourned at 11.55 a.m.