

# Heritage Lectures

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## The Anglosphere and the Advance of Freedom

*The Honorable John Howard*

**Abstract:** *The ties that bind the U.S., Great Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and in different ways other nations that share some of the values of the Anglosphere are deeper and more abiding, says former Australian Prime Minister John Howard, than the bonds between any other countries with which his country has been associated. The English-speaking nations have made an enormous contribution to the defense of liberty over the past two hundred years. Today, the instinctive familiarity and closeness of their societies make them trusted and reliable allies in the War on Terrorism.*

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**NILE GARDINER:** The Honorable John Howard was prime minister of Australia from 1996 to 2007 and won four consecutive general elections. He presided over a period of unprecedented economic growth and prosperity, and Australian leadership in world affairs. In the dark days following the 9/11 attacks, John Howard stood shoulder to shoulder with the United States and proved an unwavering friend and ally in the War on Terrorism.

As he stated in the aftermath of al-Qaeda's terrorist strike on America, "This is not just an assault on the United States: it's an assault on the way of life that we hold dear in common." Prime Minister Howard immediately announced Australia's steadfast commitment to work with the U.S. and swiftly pledged Australia's military to the war in Afghanistan. In 2003, Australia joined the U.S. in Operation Iraqi Freedom after Mr. Howard declared that "this is right, it is lawful, and it is in Australia's national interest."

### Talking Points

- The English-speaking nations, the Anglosphere, have made an enormous contribution to the defense of liberty over the past two hundred years.
- Their very long and rich heritage of the defense of freedom includes their fidelity to openness, to a robust and open political system, to the rule of law, and of course the remarkable facility of the English language.
- In the past few decades, some sections of the English-speaking world have made the error of confusing multiracialism and multiculturalism. Our societies are attractive to people from all around the world because of who we are and not because of what others would want us to be.
- In responding to the threat of terrorism, which represents an assault on the values we hold dear, there is nothing which is more important than to reassert our cultural self-belief.

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The Thatcher Freedom Lectures

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Australians have fought and died alongside their U.S. and British allies in numerous conflicts over the past hundred years, from the first and second World Wars to the battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan. Like the United States and Great Britain, Australia is a great warrior nation with a proud record in the defense of freedom. The free world owes a tremendous debt of gratitude to the Australian people for their sacrifice and their unfailing willingness to stand up to the forces of despotism on the world stage.

As Margaret Thatcher remarked of the English-speaking peoples in a speech in 2001, “The relationship between our nations is founded not just on a shared language, but also on shared history, on shared values, and upon shared ideals. Together we have withstood the forces of evil and tyranny in whatever form we found them. In the words of Winston Churchill, we have ‘discharged our common duty to the human race.’ And if freedom is to flourish, we must continue with our task.”

Today John Howard will speak on the convictions that have guided him throughout his political career. As a proud defender of economic freedom and the traditional values of the English-speaking nations, he believes that the continued threats to Western society require the members of the Anglosphere not only to retain but also to reassert their cultural self-belief. Mr. Howard was a prime minister cast from the Thatcher mold, who led his country with powerful conviction, a deep-seated love for liberty, and a firm belief in the greatness of his nation and his people.

In 2009, Mr. Howard received the U.S. Presidential Medal of Freedom from George W. Bush, who described him as “a man of steel.” He was instrumental in negotiating the U.S.–Australia treaty on defense trade cooperation, and just last night the U.S. Senate took a huge step forward toward the ratification of this treaty. John Howard is a politician of outstanding principle and integrity, and one of the finest international leaders of our generation. It is our privilege and honor to host him today for the seventh Margaret Thatcher Freedom Lecture.

—Nile Gardiner, Ph.D., is the director of the Margaret Thatcher Center for Freedom at The Heritage Foundation.

**HON. JOHN HOWARD:** One of the interesting things about leadership and interaction with leaders from other parts of the world is that every so often, a leader will say something to you in private conversation that really stays with you for a very long time, and in a short compass of words encapsulates a thought that really registers and hits home. I had an experience of that in March of 2006 when I paid an official visit to New Delhi and was received by the Indian prime minister, Dr. Singh, a wonderful, cultivated, thoughtful man who’s giving great leadership to his country. He said to me, “Prime Minister, India and Australia are two countries that have a lot in common, but we haven’t had much to do with each other.”

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***Margaret Thatcher was unquestionably the greatest British prime minister since Winston Churchill. She changed in a profoundly beneficial way the direction of her country.***

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It started me thinking about the relationship between our two countries, but it has a resonance for our discussion today about the Anglosphere; for although it’s fair to say that India would not identify herself unconditionally as a member of the Anglosphere, what the Indian prime minister was doing was drawing attention to some of the common elements of that grouping of nations which identified themselves in those aspects of our two societies that we held in common.

For me, it is a real privilege to deliver the Margaret Thatcher Freedom Lecture. Margaret Thatcher was, by any measure, a remarkable leader, a remarkable prime minister, and unquestionably the greatest British prime minister since Winston Churchill. She achieved something that few national leaders have achieved: She changed in a profoundly beneficial way the direction of her country.

Perhaps the best testament to that achievement was the fact that most of the major economic reforms that she undertook were retained by the subsequent Labour government led by Tony Blair. Although he identified with the other side of politics from me, Tony Blair was a person with whom I worked closely and for whom I had very consider-

able respect. It was very plain to me from my discussions with him, and also from his public statements, that the fundamental reforms relating to the labor market—the reforms relating to privatization and the balance of the British state between expenditure and revenue that were altered by Margaret Thatcher—were left largely untouched by the actions of the Blair government.

Margaret Thatcher was overwhelmingly a conviction politician. I'm sure many of you have read John O'Sullivan's wonderful book, *The President, the Pope, and the Prime Minister*. He has a very evocative sentence in that book where he says, "Put simply, Wojtyla was too Catholic, Margaret Thatcher too conservative, and Ronald Reagan too American." The point he was making was that was the attitude toward those three people before each of them became the people of the time and the people of the hour and, of course, collectively the contribution that Ronald Reagan, Margaret Thatcher, and Pope John Paul II, a remarkable religious leader, made to the most significant political development since World War II, and probably the most significant political development in our collective lifetimes, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of Soviet imperialism—that those three people together made a remarkable contribution to that outcome.

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***Thatcher's reforms relating to privatization and the balance of the British state between expenditure and revenue were left largely untouched by the Blair government.***

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What O'Sullivan was encapsulating was the importance of conviction in politics. It is said that compromise is a necessary political tool, and as a now-former politician, I can attest to that. But if compromise is a necessary political tool, it is equally true to say that conviction is the mother of political success, and those three remarkable leaders demonstrated that. The contribution that Margaret Thatcher made to turning around Great Britain was not only in the area of economics; I think it was even greater than that. Margaret Thatcher restored the pride of the British people in their nation, in its history and its values, and any leader has that respon-

sibility as well as providing leadership in areas of economic management and likewise.

I've chosen to talk about not only Margaret Thatcher's contribution to the cause of freedom, but also those things that are contributed by the Anglosphere, the English-speaking peoples: the contribution that those countries in that grouping have not only made in the past, but are required to make in the future. It is a grouping of countries that is bound

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together most importantly by common values. If I've learned anything from the time I've spent in politics, and I daresay it's the experience of others that have had a lifetime in public life, it is that the thing that binds nations together more than anything else is a common set of values. You can have a deep and abiding economic relationship with a country, you can be bound together by treaties, you can be bound together by common economic objectives, but unless there are shared values, the bonds are never as close as between countries that have shared values.

The values that bind the United States, Great Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and in different ways other nations that share some of the values of the Anglosphere—and that is why I commenced my remarks in recalling my discussion with the Indian prime minister—the bonds that keep us together are deeper and more abiding, in my experience, than the bonds between any other countries with which my country has been associated over my time in politics. We, for example, have a very deep and abiding and valuable trade relationship at the present time, and I hope for many decades into the future, with China. China has become Australia's greatest export market. I frequently say that China's growth is good for China and good for the world, and extremely good for Australia, because we have in very large abundance something that China wants in equally large abundance.

Under successive prime ministers, we have been able to build a very close and valuable trading relationship with China, and in the process we

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***You can be bound together by treaties or by common economic objectives, but the bonds are never as close as between countries that have shared values.***

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have become a very attractive destination for Chinese students; they seek to be educated in Australia in preference, I think, to any other country in the world. And I'm very proud of the way in which during my time as prime minister I was not only able to deepen the relationship between Australia and the United States, but also to deepen the relationship between Australia and China. Although it's a valuable relationship, it's a relationship of a different kind. Our philosophies are different. One of the strengths of our relationship was not to obsess about our philosophically different approaches to the challenges of the world, but rather to focus on those things that economically we held in common. But it's those values that bind us to the United States and the other members of the Anglosphere that are so very powerful and will always come through separately and apart from the other links that might exist between our country and other parts of the world.

It is true to say, and it's a view I hold very strongly, that we still live in a world of nation-states. Although the various international institutions have a very valuable role to play in tackling the world's problems, and although in response to the global financial crisis, the emergence of the G-20 in preference to the G-7 makes an enormous amount of sense because not only does it include the emerging economies of Brazil and Russia and India and China, and also very happily includes my own country, Australia, we won't ultimately find the salvation that we all seek economically through some kind of new international economic bureaucratic arrangement.

Ultimately, the strength of the world economy will be governed by the sum of the individual strengths of the major economic players in the world. The resumption of strong and sustained economic growth in the United States and the maintenance of it in China will together make a greater contribution to the restoration of economic health

than any other two events. In other words, it's the sum of the individual strengths of the major economies of the world that will determine the economic health of the entire world. So it is with other aspects of international order, and that is why the values that keep the Anglospheric countries together and the contribution they collectively make is so important to the world, both now and into the future. And those values are fairly readily identified by all of us. As the introduction recalled, the contribution of our societies through the years to the defense of freedom has been quite remarkable.

I frequently recalled in my speeches in the United States as prime minister that my own country is in fact the only country that has participated side by side with the United States in every conflict of any degree in which the United States has been involved since we first fought together at the Battle of Hamel on the Fourth of July in 1918. That is a remarkable association. Any gathering such as this honoring Margaret Thatcher will of course honor the extraordinary contribution made at the darkest times of World War II to the defense of liberty by the United Kingdom and her then-Dominion allies, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand, with of course magnificent assistance also from other members of the then-Commonwealth.

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***The contribution of our societies through the years to the defense of freedom has been quite remarkable.***

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So it's a very long and very rich heritage of the defense of freedom: in a world in which the values of openness and freedom are under constant assault, the fidelity of the Anglospheric nations to openness, to a robust parliamentary system of government—and in the case of the United States, certainly of a different brand but no less robust, no less open and no less committed to freedom—the fidelity of those nations to the rule of law, the willingness of those nations to apply the rule of law not only to the behavior of others but also to their own behavior, and of course the remarkable facility of the English language. We tend to take that facility for granted. Its spread and its reach and its impact are growing

greater by the year. The way in which the English language spread has been reinforced by the Internet and the way in which it has become ubiquitous in international discourse is something else that will carry very strongly the values of our societies.

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***This is not a time to apologize for our particular identity, but rather to firmly and respectfully and robustly reassert it.***

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I have two observations by way of exhortations to those of us who believe very strongly in the values of our societies and the values of the English-speaking world. In responding to the threat of terrorism—which does represent, as Dr. Gardiner said, an assault on the values we hold dear—there is nothing, in my view, which is more important than to reassert our cultural self-belief. There is a tendency to see a response to terrorism in terms of placating alternative philosophies in the hope that they will accommodate you and abandon their aggressive designs on your society.

The history of fanatical movements—and Islamist extremism is a fanatical movement by any definition—shows that there is nothing they despise more than weakness and lack of self-belief in the ideologies that they attack. I hope that all of the nations, not only in the Anglosphere, but all of the nations of the broader free world, see this as a time not to apologize for our particular identity, but rather to firmly and respectfully and robustly reassert it.

I think one of the errors that some sections of the English-speaking world have made in the past few decades has been to confuse multiracialism and multiculturalism. I am a passionate believer in multiracialism. I believe that societies are enriched if they draw, as my country has done, from all parts of the world on a non-discriminatory basis, and contribute, as the United States has done, to the building of a great society. But when a nation draws people from other parts of the world, it draws them because of the magnetism of its own culture and its own way of life, and the ideal, in my opinion, is to draw people from the four corners of the earth but to unite them behind the common values of the country which has made them welcome. I think

some of the difficulties that the United Kingdom and other countries have experienced have come from confusing those two concepts.

The Americans used to call it the “melting pot”; the notion behind it was that people came from everywhere but once they came to this country, they were Americans. I think it was a simple and wonderful ideal because becoming an American was a wonderful aspiration, and it was a goal and ideal for people all around the world. I think it’s important that we remind ourselves that our societies are attractive to people from all around the world because of who we are and not because of what others would want us to be. Therefore, to reassert our cultural self-belief is an important armor plate in the battle of ideologies that is being waged at the present time.

And finally, we should never forget that if we reach back over the last one hundred years and we number the countries that have been continuously democratic during that period of time, we find the societies of the Anglosphere occupying just about all of the places. So that must mean that we have got something right: the values of press freedom, the values of a robust political system, the values of an incorruptible judiciary.

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***To reassert our cultural self-belief is an important armor plate in the battle of ideologies that is being waged at the present time.***

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I am unapologetically a common law man. I think that the greatest guarantors of freedom are those things I cited. If you have an incorruptible judiciary, if you have a free and open press, and if you have a robust political system, those three things together will do more to defend liberty and defend freedom than any attempt to write down the fundamental rights of people. I have a rooted objection to transferring decision-making authority that belongs to the people and their representatives to judges. I respect judges, but my experience has been that they’re no more possessed of common sense and wisdom than other sections of the community, and sometimes they display less.

Ladies and gentlemen, the English-speaking nations have made an enormous contribution—a contribution, I would argue, in excess of any other grouping of countries—to the defense of liberty in the last two hundred years. Of course, I don't for a moment play down the importance of the links that each of our societies have with other nations that can't by any measure be called part of the Anglosphere. But when we share values and when we have an instinctive attraction to each other, which is certainly the case with the United States and Australia and the other members of that grouping of countries, I don't think we should feel an obligation to hide the pride that we feel in that association. Pride in your identity, pride in what you believe in, pride in your common values is an important thing for the morale and for the spirit of any nation and any group of people.

I have found in my political life that the instinctive familiarity and closeness of our societies is a quite remarkable thing and it's perhaps nowhere better demonstrated at the highest levels of government than in the fact that without question, the single closest intelligence-sharing arrangement that exists anywhere in the world is the intelligence-sharing arrangement between the five members of the Anglosphere—between the United States, Australia, Great Britain, Canada, and New Zealand. When you think of the importance of timely intelligence in the fight against terrorism, it's a remarkable tribute to the faith that we have in the integrity and the reliability and the importance of that relationship.

## Questions

**Q:** As a concerned American who's done a little bit of research, I would like to pose this: According to The Heritage Foundation's *Index of Economic Freedom*, Australia is third on the list, right behind Hong Kong and Singapore, more or less leaving one to believe that Australia is now somehow the leader of the free world (the U.S. is eighth, I believe). With Australian freedom and prosperity on the rise and with U.S. freedom and prosperity seemingly on the decline, would it be amiss to assume that Australia is the new last stand on earth?

**MR. HOWARD:** I think Americans are running the risk of becoming a little bit too hard on them-

selves. Of course, you have a huge economic debate raging at the present time; of course, the budget deficit is too high—it's been too high in the United States for quite awhile, and it's too high in the United Kingdom, and it's been that way for quite awhile—I accept all of that. But I do think that the fundamentals of the U.S. economy and the structures of this economy are still more open and free than they are in many parts of Europe, meaning that when recovery does come, the recovery will be stronger and will have a greater impact than the recovery in parts of Europe. I think there's still a fundamentally overregulated economic system in many parts of Europe. It's always seemed to me that the great advantage of the U.S. economy has been that it's nowhere near as heavily regulated as other free-market economies. That's a bit of contradiction in terms when you're talking about overregulation.

As far as Australia is concerned, we are doing very well. We came through the economic crisis very well. I think that was due to a number of things. One of them is the fact that over the last 25 years, there have been quite a lot of big economic reforms, contributions from both sides of politics to those economic reforms. We of course have benefited enormously from our resource association with China, and also still continuing with Japan. There is debate in Australia as to whether the current Australian government stimulus package has been official; I have a view that others on the other side of politics on that would disagree with, but I acknowledge that that is part of the debate.

We are doing well. We are fortunate. We are very, very lucky, as the saying goes, in relation to China. But we have to continue to work on it. My observation to Americans in the audience is don't be too hard on yourselves. In the long run, you'll still be belonging to the strongest, most powerful country in the world and your society will continue to be an exemplar of freedom to the rest of the world.

**Q:** I'm a writer with *Front Page* magazine and a 9/11 survivor from the New York City attacks. I followed the issue of nonviolent radical Islam, and you came to my attention when you made your statement that said something to the Muslims to the effect of, "You're welcome here if you want to assimilate; if not, leave." My question is, could you tell us

a little bit about the circumstances surrounding that statement and how Australia is handling that problem differently than other countries in the EU, if that's the case?

**MR. HOWARD:** I did make a statement about people who wanted Sharia law and the like, and I think I spoke for everybody, and other people said it: If people wanted Sharia law in Australia, they weren't really welcome. I don't think the great majority of Islamic Australians want Sharia law in Australia, either.

Then some things were added to that which I didn't say, and that got circulated. So some of the things you've seen in the piece to which you're referring I never said, although some of them I did say. Australia has had difficulties with Islamic extremism. We've had groups of people convicted, we changed our laws, and those changes were not only necessary, but they have proved effective. The great bulk of people of an Islamic faith and background in Australia abhor terrorism and the violence associated with Islamic extremism. It's interesting that there was sworn in yesterday the very first member of the Australian parliament of the Muslim faith, a man called Ed Husic, whose parents came from the old Yugoslavia. He's risen to a position of some prominence in the trade union movement and he was elected as the Labour Party member for Sydney, a very safe Labour seat.

I mention that because Islamic Australia is a small but welcome part of our community and overwhelmingly has made a very positive contribution. But sections of it have embraced some of the more radical views and unacceptable extremist views, and there is a law there that has dealt with them. I think it's something that we need to be vigilant about. I do think that one of the most important developments in our part of the world—it doesn't directly affect Australia, of course, but it has an influence on the potential for Islamic extremism in our part of the world—has been the relative success of democracy in Indonesia.

The success of Indonesia in transitioning from a military dictatorship to the third-largest democracy in the world in a little over ten years has been quite impressive, and it's something that I'm sorry to say

goes largely unremarked in Europe and North America. It's almost as if Indonesia slips off the radar. It's the largest Islamic country in the world. If it's successful in pointing to a moderate, non-extreme Islamic state and it becomes more of a role model for young Muslims around the world, I think that's a very positive and very healthy development. I think the leadership that Yudhoyono has given to Indonesia in that area has been quite impressive.

**Q:** You said Australia has passed a law to deal with the extremists?

**MR. HOWARD:** We passed anti-terrorism laws, and they have proved effective. They were absolutely necessary and they had very, very widespread support in the Australian community. I think they're very similar to laws that were passed here and in the United Kingdom—people can be detained for questioning for certain periods of time, we've clarified our definitions of preparing for a terrorist attack and the like, and they have proved successful and there have been some convictions and people have been jailed for very long terms.

**Q:** What is your reaction to the Tea Party or the conservative movement that has happened in the last two years of President Obama's Administration?

**MR. HOWARD:** I'll resist the temptation to dive head first into domestic American politics except to say that whenever a political party goes out of power—which happened to the Republican Party in 2008—there is always a process of introspection, and the natural reaction is sometimes to go back to one's philosophical and political roots and to reassert them more strongly. I see the Tea Party Movement being very much of that genre.

Now, as to whether individual candidate selections have been good, bad, or indifferent, I'll pass on that. I have a broad sympathy, as you might expect, for the Republican party in the United States and I wish it well. But I have to record immediately that I enjoyed a good relationship at a prime ministerial-presidential level with Bill Clinton for four years and found him actively interested in the relationship between Australia and the United States. He was of very considerable assistance at the time of the East Timor Operation where Australia had U.N.-sanctioned leadership.

But I think it's fair to say that the Tea Party movement is energizing the Republican base. You of course have voluntary voting; we have compulsory voting, and getting people out to vote is a cultural experience for an Australian political activist. I remember the first time I worked in a British election. I had a working holiday in Britain in 1964 when Harold Wilson was elected, and I offered to help the Conservatives. I was given a block of flats in East London and was meant to knock on the doors of all the listed Conservative voters—there weren't too many in this block of flats, I have to tell you. And at half past 9, I was still knocking on doors, and the polling booths closed at 10:00. People kept saying, "She'll be right, Gov." Look, I didn't think it would be "right, Gov"; the Conservatives lost the seat.

My point is that energizing the base is so important, even in a system of compulsory voting as we have. I see the Tea Party as certainly doing that.

**Q:** I'm on the board of Indigo Telecom, Australia, a Brisbane-based GSM satellite company bringing connectivity to those in the outback. The question I have for you is a little broader. You talked about cooperation, you talk about values. If you look at the new Obama national security strategy and you look at the synchronization and the kind of transnational issues that he talks about and the need for better cooperation, could you speak to the models of cooperation that are 21st century? The United Nations is not particularly effective, many people think, but the Proliferation Security Initiative has been. So could you speak to both your experience and the future of how the values get implemented among like-minded countries and the cooperation that comes from it?

**MR. HOWARD:** That is a broad question. My view about international organizations, starting with the United Nations, is that I'm in favor of the United Nations when it works. I had firsthand experience with the East Timor intervention where that worked, and it worked because none of the five permanent members of the Security Council had any objection to what was happening, so therefore we had no problem getting the U.N. blessing. We had in the end the reluctant acquiescence of Indonesia and we had a country on the spot, Australia, that

was willing to give leadership, and we had cooperation from neighboring countries, so it worked.

Quite a number of the specialized agencies of the United Nations work, but my reservation has always been that you cannot allow the United Nations to be the ultimate determinant of whether action is going to be taken. I experienced, as did former President Bush and Tony Blair, the frustration of the behavior of the French and the Russians in relation to Iraq. Now, it's a long debate and it gets very heavy treatment in my autobiography that's coming out at the end of next month, but the reality is that certain things can only be achieved if people act as a coalition—if they're willing, if they act collectively; whatever language you want to use. I just caution against placing total faith in international bodies.

In relation to economic recovery, the G-20 can meet and it can make declarations, but what will really determine more than anything else the revival of the world economy will be the strength of the U.S. economy and the continuing strength of the Chinese economy—closely, but still at a respectable distance, followed by the revitalization of some of the European economies which are in difficulty.

There remains a dominant place in the world for like-minded countries acting in different ways. It's not easy; you're not going to reform the United Nations. The veto-wielding powers of the United Nations reflect, as everybody knows, the power structure of the world in 1945, but try taking a veto away from the French, or indeed the Russians. Europe is over-represented. It's not going to change in a hurry, and there will be immense argument about what the additional veto-wielding countries would be.

I think there has to be a continuing role for countries to act together, and it's more likely that you'll get that action from countries that share philosophies and values in common. I think it's desirable that they are the countries that do act together, because the values they may seek to uphold in that joint action are far more beneficial than others. So I think there is very much a role for that. Not to denigrate the capacity of bodies like the U.N. to be effective in certain circumstances, but they are increasingly limited circumstances.



**Q:** Departing from the Anglosphere for a minute, I would like to ask you what your view is on the currently increasing tension between China and Japan over the Senkaku Islands, since regional instability resulting from that might affect your country.

**MR. HOWARD:** I'm very happy to address that question. I say that the trade and political relationship between Australia and Japan over the last 40 or 50 years has been quite remarkable and economically has made a very big contribution to Australia's post-World War II prosperity. I wouldn't want, in the context of our main discussion, to in any way play down the harmony in our relationship.

I'm not over-fussed about that tension. It has a certain inevitability about it, and it's an illustration of the ongoing and still very difficult relationship between Japan and China. We've had an incident involving a fishing vessel, and it seems to have been more or less resolved. I think you'll continue to have those sorts of incidents.

The good thing about Chinese relations with her near neighbors of recent times is that they have improved between China and Taiwan. The Kuomintang administration in Taiwan has a far more pragmatic attitude towards relations with the mainland. I was in Taiwan in the early part of the year and had a very lengthy discussion with President Ma, and I think you'll have a Hong Kong-type understanding between China and Taiwan at some point in the future. I may sound very pragmatic in saying that's a good thing, and I think that will probably occur and that it will be, from our point of view, something to be desired.

**Q:** How does one reconcile reasserting a pride in the Anglosphere with reaching out to the hearts and minds of Muslims in mainly Muslim countries around the world?

**MR. HOWARD:** I don't see an incompatibility between reasserting, reaffirming, not being ashamed of one's own values. The problem with that proposition is that it implies that the only way you can curry favor with others is to apologize for who you are. I've always found difficulty with that proposition. I thought mutual respect between nations had to be founded, obviously, on the common principles of respect for individual freedom. There are

certain things in these relations that aren't negotiable. You can't negotiate away individual freedom, you can't negotiate away equality between men and women, you can't negotiate away the central commitment you have to the role of the family in society. I think in any dealings you really have to be defiant in relation to those things.

But my concern is that among elements of our societies in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks and all the debate that went on about that, the reaction has been: Look, our problem is we should sort of blend away our own cultural identity and make it all sort of mushy and unclear and indistinct, and in that way we'll win the favor of the people who don't like our societies. Now, it never works that way. My assessment of Islamic fanaticism is that it identifies that as craven weakness and not something to be respected.

If I can draw on my reading of history, I think that kind of thing encourages a tougher response rather than an accommodating one. I think one can reconcile the two. I think we have to avoid, though, making the assumption or implying that the way to win favor from extremism is to make yourself a little more attractive to that extremism. I think that's fatal.

**Q:** You mentioned a bit about multiculturalism in Australia and multiculturalism in the U.K. How do you feel about the way the debate over multiculturalism is going right now in the U.S.? And if I could just follow up on one issue, one of the big issues here politically is the health care issue. How do you view that from the perspective of an Australian, seeing that Australia has what most people would consider to be universal health care?

**MR. HOWARD:** I think, with all its imperfections, Australia's probably got a better health system than most other comparable countries. It's really built on a mix of public and private provision. It has a greater degree of universality than the American system. There was a big debate in Australia for many years about our health system, and in the end I came to the political conclusion that the Australian people wanted the Medicare system that had been introduced by the former government on the other side of politics. So we endorsed it, but with the addition of very strong incentives for private health insurance so that you have a mix of the two. I think that is a better system and I think it does make bet-

ter provision for people who are really struggling, who are poor, than any alternative system. It delivers a better quality of health care. I'm not saying it's perfect, and I acknowledge that the facilities and research and everything available for people in this country is quite remarkable, but it is inevitably beyond the reach of many of the citizens of this country. But as to the intricacies of what's gone in relation to President Obama's proposal, I don't really want to get into that.

Now, the debate on multiculturalism in the United States, I think, has really similar features to the debate that's gone on in my country and Great Britain. The problem has been to confuse multiculturalism and multiracialism. We should all be strongly in favor of multiracialism, the complete equality of the races and total respect for people according to their merit and their worth and their character, irrespective of their race. But that doesn't mean to say that you try and build a federation of cultures within a single nation. Every nation has got to have its own identity, and people are attracted to a country because of its identity. People want to live in the United States not because of some futuristic ideal of multiculturalism; it's because of what they regard as the American way of life and American values. Part of those values, of course, is to respect people of all races and to include them fully in society, but according to the mores and the practices and the attitudes and the values of the American community.

And you could say that in relation to Australia, you could say that in relation to Britain, and it's increasingly being said by people in continental Europe as well. When I talk about it, that's really what I have in mind.

**Q:** The Obama Administration has come under quite heavy fire in parts of Europe over its perceived lack of interest in maintaining strategic alliances. It's come under very heavy fire, for example, in Britain for the perceived anti-British bias, and commentators have pointed to President Obama's very heavy bashing of BP, Hillary Clinton's support for Argentina over its call for negotiations in the Falklands, for example. Could you comment on the Obama Administration's stance towards Australia and how

you see that moving forward and its track record over the last 18 months or so?

**MR. HOWARD:** I haven't seen anything so far in what the Administration has done that's had any kind of unfriendly overtones towards Australia. That's not my perception. Clearly, everyone knows that President Obama came in with a somewhat different agenda in relation to both Iraq and some other issues from what had been followed by the Bush Administration. I thought one of the initiatives of the Bush Administration in our part of the world that hasn't received the emphasis that it might have either from the Obama Administration or from the new Australian government was the trilateral security dialogue between Japan, the United States and Australia. I thought that was a valuable counterpoise, if I can put it that way, to China, particularly if it had ultimately included India. I don't see any difficulty in emphasizing the common democracy of countries in our part of the world. But they are at the margin. It would not be fair of me to say that the Obama Administration has displayed any indifference towards Australia, and I know that if he visits Australia in the not too distant future he'll be welcomed, as any American President will always be welcome in our country.

I think the observation can be made that maybe some European countries had certain expectations, because some of the European countries were very critical—I think unfairly—of the previous Administration. I think there is an unhealthy anti-Americanism in some parts of Europe, and I find that ungrateful and it's always drawn a lot of hostility from me. I greatly respected Tony Blair's very, very strong support, not only for the United States, but also strong identification with the view that Americans couldn't be expected endlessly to commit themselves to Europe unless there was some warmth and reciprocity. I think some Europeans tend to forget that. They had expectations in relation to President Obama and perhaps it's not so much that he's fallen short of them, but rather they had expectations that were never entirely reasonable.

—*The Honorable John Howard served as prime minister of Australia from 1996 to 2007.*