Remarks By President Obama to the Australian Parliament

Parliament House
Canberra, Australia

10:42 A.M. AEST

PRESIDENT OBAMA: Prime Minister Gillard, Leader Abbott, thank you both for your very warm welcome. Mr. Speaker, Mr. President, members of the House and Senate, ladies and gentlemen, I thank you for the honor of standing in this great chamber to reaffirm the bonds between the United States and the Commonwealth of Australia, two of the world’s oldest democracies and two of the world’s oldest friends.

To you and the people of Australia, thank you for your extraordinary hospitality. And here, in this city -- this ancient “meeting place” -- I want to acknowledge the original inhabitants of this land, and one of the world’s oldest continuous cultures, the First Australians.

I first came to Australia as a child, travelling between my birthplace of Hawaii, and Indonesia, where I would live for four years. As an eight-year-old, I couldn’t always understand your foreign language. (Laughter.) Last night I did try to talk some "Strine." (Laughter.) Today I don’t want to subject you to any earbashing. I really do love that one and I will be introducing that into the vernacular in Washington. (Laughter.)

But to a young American boy, Australia and its people -- your optimism, your easy-going ways, your irreverent sense of humour -- all felt so familiar. It felt like home. I’ve always wanted to return. I tried last year -- twice. But this is a Lucky Country, and today I feel lucky to be here as we mark the 60th anniversary of our unbreakable alliance.

The bonds between us run deep. In each other’s story we see so much of ourselves. Ancestors who crossed vast oceans -- some by choice, some in chains. Settlers who pushed west across sweeping plains. Dreamers who toiled with hearts and hands to lay railroads and to build cities. Generations of immigrants who, with each new arrival, add a new thread to the brilliant tapestry of our nations. And we are citizens who live by a common creed -- no matter who you are, no matter what you look like, everyone deserves a fair chance; everyone deserves a fair go.

Of course, progress in our society has not always come without tensions, or struggles to overcome a painful past. But we are countries with a willingness to face our imperfections, and to keep reaching for our ideals. That’s the spirit we saw in this chamber three years ago, as this nation inspired the world with a historic gesture of reconciliation with Indigenous Australians. It’s the spirit of progress, in America, which allows me to stand before you today, as President of the United States. And it’s the spirit I’ll see later today...
when I become the first U.S. President to visit the Northern Territory, where I’ll meet the
Traditional Owners of the Land.

Nor has our progress come without great sacrifice. This morning, I was humbled and
deeply moved by a visit to your war memorial to pay my respects to Australia’s fallen sons
and daughters. Later today, in Darwin, I’ll join the Prime Minister in saluting our brave
men and women in uniform. And it will be a reminder that -- from the trenches of the
First World War to the mountains of Afghanistan -- Aussies and Americans have stood
together, we have fought together, we have given lives together in every single major
conflict of the past hundred years. Every single one.

This solidarity has sustained us through a difficult decade. We will never forget the attacks
of 9/11, that took the lives not only of Americans, but people from many nations,
including Australia. In the United States, we will never forget how Australia invoked the
ANZUS Treaty -- for the first time ever -- showing that our two nations stood as one. And
none of us will ever forget those we’ve lost to al Qaeda’s terror in the years since,
including innocent Australians.

Task One: Short Answer Questions

1. What is the register of this text? What are the social purposes of this piece? (3 marks)
2. Honorific titles can be seen on lines 1 - 2. What does this show about the
situational context and the social distance and level of respect between President
Obama and Prime Minister Gillard and Leader Abbott? (2 marks)
3. 'Fallen sons' (line 34) is an example of which semantic feature? What does Obama
employ this feature here and how does it appeal to positive face needs? (3 marks)
4. President Obama lists some familiar Australian cultural values on lines 14 - 15.
Referring to the subsystem of lexicology, how are these cultural values reflected in
the current Australian context? Refer to two separate examples. (4 marks)
5. How does President Obama aim to socially include himself with his Australian
audience? Refer to two separate examples. (4 marks)
6. What is the effect of a parallelism on line 19? (2 marks)

Task Two: Write an analytical commentary on the transcript above.