

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 11, 2017

Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker of the House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Speaker:

We request that you extend an invitation to Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull to address a joint meeting of Congress to reinforce our longstanding, close relationship and to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the Battles of the Coral Sea, Midway, and Guadalcanal, three critical moments in early World War II when the United States and Australia stopped imperial Japan's expansion in the Pacific. An address by one of our closest partners in the Asia-Pacific would also strengthen Congress's understanding of the challenges our nations face together in containing China, defeating terrorism, and promoting the rule of law, free expression and free markets.

Through two world wars, and in every major conflict since, Australian troops have fought and died alongside Americans in defense of democracy. Together, we constitute two of the "five eyes" in a network of shared intelligence gathering and analysis. But we share more than a common cause; with many Americans and Australians traveling between our two countries each year, the cultural ties between us have always been strong as well.

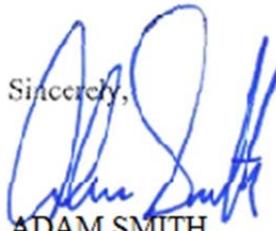
Our close relationship with Australia also benefits the American economy. In 2012, the most recent year for which data is available, our nations traded \$65 billion worth of private goods and services. U.S. exports to Australia, our fifteenth-largest goods export market, were valued at \$48 billion, a key factor in our \$32 billion trade surplus. Australian foreign direct investment in the United States was nearly \$43 billion, mainly in the manufacturing and financial sectors. Maintaining strong ties with Australia is critical to expanding jobs and opportunities for our people here in the United States.

Last week, you stated that "Australia is a very important and central ally, and it's going to continue to be." In September, you noted that "The alliance we've built with Australia over the past seven decades is stronger than ever." These are statements with which every Member of the House can agree, and an invitation to the Prime Minister, in consultation with the executive branch, to visit and address Congress would be very well received. It would send a clear message that Congress continues to support a strong U.S.-Australia relationship based in mutual respect, and that the legislative branch retains its important role in promoting a sound foreign policy that benefits our nation and its people.



ELIOT L. ENGEL
Ranking Member
Committee on Foreign Affairs

Sincerely,



ADAM SMITH
Ranking Member
Committee on Armed Services