



AUSTRALIA'S JOHN HOWARD RECEIVES 2008 IRVING KRISTOL AWARD

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American Enterprise Institute president Christopher DeMuth announced today that former Australian prime minister John Winston Howard is the recipient of AEI's Irving Kristol Award for 2008. The annual award, selected by the Institute's Council of Academic Advisers, is given to individuals who have made exceptional intellectual or practical contributions to improved government policy, social welfare, or political understanding. Mr. Howard will receive the award and deliver the Irving Kristol Lecture at the Institute's annual dinner on March 5, 2008, at the Washington Hilton Hotel in Washington, D.C.

John Howard is one of the world's most successful democratic politicians. Chosen as Australia's twenty-fifth prime minister in March 1996, Howard and his party were reelected in 1998, 2001, and 2004—making him his nation's second-longest-serving prime minister at the time of his retirement by the voters in last November's national elections. After September 11, 2001, Prime Minister Howard forged a strong alliance with the United States and Great Britain in the global war on terror, sending Australian troops to Afghanistan and later to Iraq.

In an interview before becoming prime minister, Howard described himself as a quintessential Australian: "I'm direct, unpretentious, and pretty dogged and I hope I've got a capacity to laugh at myself and not take myself too seriously." Those qualities served him well over a long career in Liberal Party politics that began when, at age eighteen, he joined the Young Liberal Movement. He was first elected to parliament in 1974 at the age of thirty-four, and eighteen months later he was named minister for business and consumer affairs by then-prime minister Malcolm Fraser, later serving as minister for special trade negotiations and then as federal treasurer from 1977 to 1983. He was leader of the Liberal Party and the Liberal-National Coalition Opposition in 1985-1989 and, following a period of intra-party turmoil, was unanimously elected opposition leader in 1995. The opposition's 1996 election victory ended an unprecedented thirteen-year incumbency by the Australian Labor Party.

As prime minister, Howard affirmed the independence of Australia's central bank, continued the deregulatory policies of his predecessor, balanced the budget, reorganized the

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country's welfare system, privatized the Australian telecommunications giant Telstra, reformed labor laws, and cut taxes. Australia's economy soared, even during the Asian financial crisis that devastated so many of its neighbors, growing every year for the past sixteen years. As the editorial page editor of the *Australian* and former AEI staff member Tom Switzer has written, "[Howard] presided over the longest economic boom since the gold rushes of the nineteenth century."

In foreign policy, Howard was a steadfast friend of the United States. When asked by an interviewer about the Iraq war, he said, "I am not going to be part of a policy which leaves the job unfinished and leaves behind [to] one or two other countries the responsibility of completing the job; that is not the Australian way of doing things." His government took a leadership role in dealing with security and economic problems in small Pacific countries such as the Solomon Islands, as well as in East Timor, where Australian troops are the mainstay of the country's current stability.

Born on July 26, 1939, John Howard attended the University of Sydney, receiving a bachelor of laws in 1961 and being admitted as a solicitor of the New South Wales Supreme Court in July 1962. He met his wife, Janette, a teacher, at a political rally.

Howard's parents chose "Winston" as his middle name in honor of Winston Churchill. Howard's political defeat in 2007 after a long and successful service was reminiscent of the great British leader's defeat after World War II. Like Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan before him, Howard has a strong commitment to the Anglosphere alliance.

In his interview before assuming his post as prime minister, Mr. Howard was asked what he would like to see for his country by the year 2000. He said he would like to see his nation "comfortable and relaxed" about its history, the present, and the future. He said he wanted to position Australia at a unique intersection of Europe, North America, and Asia, to carve a "special niche for ourselves . . . in the history of the next century." His record of accomplishment suggests that has been done.

Further information about the Irving Kristol Award and Lecture, including past recipients and the texts of their lectures, is posted at www.aei.org/kristolaward/.

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