



Phil Scanlan AM

Founder Australian American Leadership Dialogue and
Australian Consul General New York-

***The Core Role of Australia-US Relations in
Australia's Global Engagement***

Phil was our first guest speaker presenting on Zoom. The session went extremely well with 73 members enjoying an outstanding presentation.

He is a self-confessed globalist who gave us a world view of recent events and the impact these may have on Australia and the consequent imperatives for us.

In response to the Covid 19 pandemic, the widespread impact will require each nation to make decisions about rebalancing the profound impact on their economy, public health, education, manufacturing, workforce etc.

He emphasised the need for nations to work together to guard against the inevitable pandemics of the future with particular emphasis on Australia's interaction with our Asian neighbours. This was a recurring theme.

Phil highlighted our position as a treasured country and on several occasions emphasised how we must add value to the world.

The ANZUS Treaty and the Colombo Plan established a healthy relationship with our neighbourhood, and he emphasised that our relationship with the US was an integral part of our global engagement. Another recurring theme.

Experience at Oxford and the Kennedy School at Harvard awakened Phil to the lack of a high-level relationship between Australia and the US. The creation of private networks can lead to relationships that build trust and so enable solutions to be found even between those with opposing views.

So, Phil with the support of Presidents Bush (senior) and Clinton, created the Australian American Leadership Dialogue. Meeting annually, this bi-partisan organisation of very high-level national leaders has done much over the past 28 years to shore up our alliance with the US. Nick Greiner and Kim Beazley were among Australia's initial participants. Phil outlined a number of the major achievement touchpoints that have flowed from these meetings.

Answering a member's question, he felt that President Trump actions speak louder than his language and have made some positive achievements for the US that don't always get international press recognition. He emphasised that we need to be mindful of press bias.

Phil had a level of concern about the money printing in the US. Combined with other major issues this could come back to bite America.

Regarding the apparent growing American isolationism, he noted that the country has had a long tradition of this aspect in its foreign policy. He pointed out how Trump had given NATO countries a wake up regarding defence spending and noted that in past years, America also underwrote our high standard of living enabling us to underspend on defence.

Phil placed a very strong emphasis on the importance of Australia keeping our country on the US radar. This being a continual challenge with the high turnover of Congress, given the election cycle every 2 years in this important Chamber.

He stated that our relationship with China is critical. While our US relationship is our bedrock security, the balancing of security and economics with China is one we must tighten up. Sometimes, we may have been naive. We need to become more realistic and consolidate our relationships to the North.