

Government of New Zealand

Funeral service for the Right Honourable Michael Moore, ONZ, AO

Address by the Honourable Kim Beazley AC Governor of Western Australia

Friday, 14th February 2020

I would firstly like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we meet and pay my respects to their elders past and present.

Mike was my best friend in Washington at the time we were both Ambassadors to the U.S. I have and had many really good American friends. But our views, purposes and personalities meshed. With Yvonne and my wife Susie we socialised in a fun, tension free environment. I was aware that despite the apparently improbable vessel, the unforced humility and self-deprecation, I had as an ally in Mike, a man of genius. A man who would never present a problem without an answer, whose knowledge of the character of the distribution of power in the international system kept him permanently realistic but also alert to every possibility. His genius took him to exactly the right set of words to use and the right theatre to play in. He once told me one of his colleagues with whom he contested said to him "Mike, folk think I am a gentleman and you are devious. What they don't know is I am devious and you are a gentleman." Just so.

Other speakers will concentrate on the amazing disjunction between an arrested education and his rise to the top of his profession and his international statesmanship at the WTO. Massive intelligence, empathy and above all insatiable curiosity beats formal book learning every time. Instead in his case he ended up writing the books. He spoke only English but joked his accent made him incomprehensible in that. And yet people who spoke a very Babel of languages, came to rely on him globally and in my view Washington.

I think those of you here will value most the life he lived with you politically and socially. Externally, as a brilliant trading nation, you will value his time at the WTO. He saved that body when it virtually collapsed into a squabbling entity like 7 wild dogs in a sack, surrounded by huge hostile crowds in SEATTLE. In three years, he redirected the organisation, massively empowered by new members (many from the South Pacific). Giving the second most powerful economy of all, China a road to acceptance ensuring that, though a revisionist power, at least a fingertip touching relationship with the international liberal order. They could do with his brilliance now but when the WTO needs him most he was incapacitated and now he is gone far too young.

Quite possibly, you would see his final post, New Zealand's Ambassador to the U.S, as the lesser of the positions he held. Maybe a reward for his other achievements. But for me, and I would argue my country, that was critical. We need a strong relationship between the U.S. and NZ. You are both critical security and economic partners. U.S. Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, said of him, "A stronger U.S.-NZ partnership is one of his many legacies. We send our deepest condolences to the people of NZ on his passing."

I did not know him well when I got to D.C. but I had met him many times. First in the 1980s when I visited, not terribly popularly though frequently, when I was Defence Minister. Then on his many trade trips to Australia and his regular visits to South Australia. His contribution was recognised by a high Australian order. But I really got to know him and marvellous Yvonne in D.C. There he was a force of nature.

The TPP negotiation was well underway. He was a frequent speaker on it. An advocate for free trade from the left. The House Speaker Boehner used to say to me “stop proselytising Republicans. Your and Mike’s job is to get 30 Democrat votes.” They were identified and we used to corral them at steak houses and Embassy dinners. Those congress folk were always full of Mike stories. Democrat Senator Max Baucus used to take groups of Ambassadors on tours of his state. Mike on one of these popped up in Yellowstone National Park with its famous Old Faithful geyser. As he watched it spurt 180 feet disgorging 5,000 tonnes of water.

Mike commented “Makes you feel glad to be alive and a man even if somewhat challenged.” Senator Baucus reported this insight to all and sundry. The U.S. in the end hasn’t ratified but its presence guaranteed a successful conclusion. Mike had a lot to do with that.

He helped the Americans really want to get back on good footing with NZ and to take an interest in the South Pacific. He achieved the first and marshalled the South Pacific ambassadors for propaganda and festival. I was amazed to see then U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry turn up at the fabulous New Zealand Embassy to address us in Assembly.

He was full of stories of possibility and events which always included a spot for four drunken Kiwis. Their relevance was not fully established but they were ubiquitous in every event he anticipated.

I find comfort at times like this, in a poem by the late Henry Scott-Holland, priest at St Paul’s Cathedral spoken at the lying in state of King Edward VII, from a sermon “Death the King of Terrors.” It begins:

*“Death is nothing at all.
It does not count.
I have only slipped away into the next room.
Nothing has happened.”*

It concludes:

*“Why should I be out of mind because I am out of sight?
I am but waiting for you, for an interval,
Somewhere very near,
Just around the corner.
All is well.
Nothing is hurt, nothing is lost.
One brief moment and all will be as it was before.
How we shall laugh at the trouble of parting
When we meet again.”*

Many of you probably are not believers but I am. I believe the angels are doubled up with Mike’s stories and jokes. He has probably negotiated a spot for four drunken Kiwis. While he waits for Yvonne and all of us.