

# The Australian

## When it comes to being smart, our Kev fits the Bill

Brad Norington, New York | *September 24, 2009*

Article from: [The Australian](#)

**KEVIN Rudd has given Bill Clinton a dose of the nerdy know-all side to his personality - and the former US president is impressed.**

Mr Clinton described the Prime Minister yesterday as "pretty smart", rating him one of the world's most intelligent leaders.

He described how, as the pair shared breakfast two days earlier, Mr Rudd went into "excruciating detail" on George Washington's strategy to defend New York against the British during the American War of Independence. The former president, an Oxford scholar, gave his impressions of Mr Rudd while introducing him as a panellist at the annual meeting of the Clinton Global Initiative think tank.

Mr Rudd's appearance was a break from his main reason to be in town - to attend the UN climate change conference before this week's G20 summit in Pittsburgh.

On Sunday, Mr Rudd visited Mr Clinton at his home in Chappaqua, north of New York, and the pair breakfasted together at a local cafe.

Mr Clinton said yesterday: "In my opinion, he is one of the most well-informed, well-read, intelligent leaders in the world today."

But the former president's admiration did not prevent one slip as he referred to the Prime Minister as "Mr Rude". It is not clear if Mr Clinton is aware of reports in the Australian media in the past few days about Mr Rudd's temper-fuelled use of bad language at home.

Mr Clinton said Mr Rudd was like many Australian politicians who "know more about America than they know about Australia", and referred to his encyclopaedic knowledge of a precious part of US history. "He then proceeded to describe in excruciating detail George Washington's strategy to hold New York in the revolutionary war," Mr Clinton said.

But it didn't stop there. Mr Rudd had told him how his wife, Therese Rein, gave him for his birthday this week a book of maps used by Washington.

"This guy's pretty smart," Mr Clinton said.

Since he arrived on Saturday, Mr Rudd has been calling for urgent action on climate change, and wants Australia to be seen as frontrunner for reform.

He co-chaired a climate change round-table at the UN yesterday, as well as being a panellist for Mr Clinton.

But the main focus remains on the leaders of the US, China and India and their potential remedies for reducing carbon emissions.

Mr Rudd told Mr Clinton yesterday the larger institution of the G20, rather than the G8, made sense as a problem-solving body for the 21st century because it included China, India, Brazil, Mexico and the Muslim world.

Unspoken, but obviously included in the PM's preferred G20 mix, was Australia. "It's got its imperfections but you have all those guys on board," Mr Rudd said.