

AUSTRALIA'S MIDDLE POWER DIPLOMACY

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I thank the Australian Institute for Jewish Affairs for giving me the honour of delivering this inaugural Sir Zelman Cowen Annual Address on International Relations. I can think of no better way for me to express my admiration for the immense contribution that this great Australian has made to the public life of this country and to civilised values everywhere.

While I can't pretend that my own career has even begun to match Sir Zelman's - whose could? - our paths have in fact intersected, or run on parallel courses, many times now over the last thirty years or more. I knew him first when I was a student at Melbourne University Law School, where as Dean of the Faculty and Professor of Public Law, he taught me constitutional law with great vigour and brilliance: the words, then as ever, flowed in lucid torrents, precisely honed, elegantly crafted and immensely stimulating.

Zelman's passion for language was undoubtedly reinforced by his time at Oxford (an experience that I also had, and enjoyed as much). In a recent autobiographical essay, he quoted Sir Carleton Allen to this effect:

I do not know of any place where the use of English language is more sedulously disciplined than at Oxford. Looseness, verbosity or vulgarity of expression, are of all things anathema...bad style is bad thinking.

While some of Oxford's sons and daughters do, I concede, lapse into bad linguistic habits from time to time, there can be no doubt that Zelman - reinforced by his many returns to High Tables over the years, culminating in his splendidly distinguished tenure as Provost of Oriel and Pro-Vice Chancellor during the 1980s - has remained one of the great English stylists of his time.

On my own return from Oxford, I had the pleasure of teaching for a time alongside Zelman in the Melbourne Law Faculty. Here I saw another rather nice side of him -

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the legal educationist with a heart as well as a mind. This was encapsulated, for example, in a conversation I recall him having one morning in the staff tearoom:

"What on earth are you going to do with Miss X, Zelman?", a Professorial colleague asked. "I see she's failed Constitutional Law for what must be about the fourth time - but she's got to get it to finish her degree. It looks like she is going to be with us forever."

"We can't go on like this, I agree", Zelman replied. "Perhaps I should resolve the problem once and for all by setting her a special supplementary exam, with just one question: Is there a Section 92 in the Australian Constitution?"

"But what if she says no?"

"Then I shall reason with her!"

Zelman has spent most of his professional life reasoning with people, and doing so from a humane and liberal perspective. He has always been a great crusader for civil liberties and law reform: a strong opponent of the Communist Party Dissolution Referendum in 1951; a great advocate over many decades, including during his distinguished Chairmanship of the British Press Council, for both free speech and the right to privacy (a combination I certainly believe can live together, although my own advocacy of this got me into a great deal of trouble when I was Attorney-General!); and a strongly committed all-round law reformer - evidenced by his term (following me for once!) as a member of the Australian Law Reform Commission, before he had to relinquish this, and all his other hats, to put on his most distinguished hat of all as Australia's Governor-General.

As one of those who unmercifully harangued Sir John Kerr (along with some even greater constitutional villains) for that gentleman's role in the events of 1975, I guess I played my own small part - as did, no doubt, a number of others here tonight - in securing Zelman's elevation. No-one has ever doubted, then or since, that Zelman Cowen was the perfect man for the job. Everywhere he went in the country he did bring that 'touch of healing' of which he has spoken. And to not only be gracious, good humoured and indestructibly energetic, but to know almost everything about almost everything, is to bring a combination of qualifications to the job that can rarely, if ever, have been matched!

Zelman has always been, even before his appointment as Governor-General, rather cautious about committing himself on the question of an Australian Republic. To the extent that he has taken sides, it has been to suggest that the case for change may not be strong, given that, as he put it recently, 'in practice all the significant functions of a Head of State are discharged by an Australian Governor-General who is Australian and whose source of appointment is in fact Australian'. I suppose this is not really the occasion to be pursuing my campaign to enlist Zelman to the Republican cause - but I would put just one question to him which is squarely relevant, in fact, to my main topic tonight.

The question is this: is the Governor-General really able to exercise all significant Head of State functions when he or she simply does not get received and honoured as a Head of State should be when travelling abroad to represent this country? There are many occasions when it would admirably serve Australia's national interests to be represented abroad by a Head of State, but I know how hard it is to persuade most countries to treat our Governor-General as such, and to get some countries to receive him at all. Very recently, for example, Mr Hayden - travelling to France to commemorate Australia's role in the defence of that country in World War I - was welcomed by a junior official, met nobody more senior than a junior Minister during his stay, and was farewelled by an even more junior official. The Queen of Australia herself would no doubt be a delightful representative on some of these occasions, but of course when she travels abroad - other than to this country - it is always as the United Kingdom's sovereign, not ours. Does all this not amount to at least one significant practical limitation in the present arrangements?

Zelman Cowen's preoccupations over the years have been less with international affairs than with the law, education, press freedom and other civil liberties issues, and social policy. But he has written wisely and well about the Commonwealth of Nations - a bridge building institution between the developed and developing world to which I and this Government remain firmly attached, not least because of its growing preoccupation in recent years with issues of human rights and democratisation. And of course he has been a strong, articulate and consistent supporter of Israel - and of a lasting peace in the Middle East based on a just outcome not only for Israel but for those in the region with whom Israel must share its future.

In the world of international affairs, we would all be much more confident and comfortable about the future if we had rather more people in high places like Sir Zelman Cowen: with his breadth of intelligence, his depth of humanity, his constant sense of inquiry, and above all his ability and willingness to reason with others.

The New World Order

As we look at the world around us today there is certainly much to be done, and thought about, by people with these qualities.

The world is a rather less happy place than we hoped it would be after the end of the Cold War. Economic and social deprivation continues to be a harsh daily reality for far too many of our peoples. Not even the most advanced countries are immune: the developed Western economies are limping, with low growth rates, historically high unemployment rates, increasing disparities as a result between rich and poor, and a continuing inability so far to reach agreement about the Uruguay Round trade liberalisation measures that are so necessary to give a kick-start (worth more than \$200 billion per annum) to world trade and economic growth.

In the non-Western world, rates of growth have been extraordinarily uneven: the spectacular

advance in some regions, in particular East Asia, has been in stark contrast to the continuing terrible deprivation and poverty in others. Some states - like Somalia - have simply been unable to cope with exploding internal economic, political and social problems, and for all practical purposes have collapsed, leaving the international community to respond, somehow, to the humanitarian crises that have followed.

In security terms, the end of the Cold War has seen the end of the super-power nuclear arms race, and has relieved us of the immediate threat of nuclear devastation. We have seen major achievements in nuclear arms reduction, and for the first time in the history of the nuclear age a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, which would ban all nuclear tests in all environments for all time, seems within our reach notwithstanding China's recent breach of the de facto moratorium we had all hoped might be maintained. This year we signed at last, after twenty years of negotiation, the Chemical Weapons Convention. But much remains to be done to bring this and other instruments into effective operation. And there are still too many countries unwilling to submit themselves to the disciplines, more important and more necessary now than ever, of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Moreover, the threat of conflicts between states has certainly not diminished with the end of the Cold War. If anything, the removal of the Cold War gridlock - the discipline imposed by the superpowers on each other and their respective supporters - has created more room than ever for states to manoeuvre. Some are beginning to do so, and some are bound to seek to do so in the future. Some of the emerging economic powers have yet to acquire political or military profiles commensurate with their new wealth, and the process of adjustment certainly has ample potential to generate regional tensions. Should those tensions escalate into conflict, the unhappy reality is that proliferation of more sophisticated conventional weapons, and expansion of the capacity to develop weapons of mass destruction, makes any prospect of major regional conflict an alarming one for the world as a whole.

The release of Cold War pressures has been associated with another major new development of security concern with which we are all now disturbingly familiar - the resurgence of ethno-nationalism, often taking a violent form. Some ethnic groups have been prepared to pursue their claims for self-determination within the framework of existing states, arguing essentially for minority human rights protection - claims of right to which, on first principles, the international community should be willing to support. But many other such groups have made clear that they will be satisfied by nothing less than their nations becoming states, causing the fragmentation of existing states in the process, and creating some very real dilemmas for the international community as a result. Again, the proliferating availability of weaponry of every degree of sophistication has given a sharp new edge to these concerns. When CNN's cameras beam into our loungerooms violent and bloody scenes from the former Soviet Union, the Balkans, and parts of the African continent we have a very strong sense of what Yeats was talking about when he said "Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold".

Looking out upon a world with all these characteristics, it is easy to be pessimistic and

fatalistic. But I don't think we should retreat into that habit of mind. For everything that has gone wrong over the last few years, there is something else that has gone right. To match against the awful continuing tragedy in the former Yugoslavia, we have, for example, the agreed Declaration of Principles for the Middle East - of course only the first step in what remains a long journey, but an enormously encouraging one notwithstanding. And to match against the continuing chaos and uncertainty in Somalia, and the at best very limited success of the UN operation there, we have now the unquestioned success of the UN operation in Cambodia - and the end at last of more than twenty years of what has been a real 20th century tragedy, involving bloody war, civil war, genocide, invasion and civil war again.

A terrible conflict continues in Angola, but peace is at hand at last in Mozambique - and in South Africa the final death of apartheid seems at last imminent. Military regimes have given way to democratic ones throughout Latin America. Many problems remain to be solved in the former Soviet Union, but governments that can credibly claim to reflect the will of their peoples are in place throughout Central and Eastern Europe. The military regime in Burma continues to resist the obvious mood of its people for liberty and democracy, but elsewhere in the region traditionally monolithic government structures - driven in many cases by economic imperatives - are beginning to show signs of flexibility and responsiveness.

Looking at the Asia Pacific region as a whole, while there are some potential security flashpoints (notably the nuclear issue in North Korea, and competing territorial claims in the South China Sea), and some continuing unhappy internal situations in a number of countries, the region is as peaceful as it has ever been, with everyone's attention devoted these days much more to making money than to making or preparing for war. Unlike a good many other parts of the world, there is greater momentum toward integration than fragmentation. Despite the extraordinary political, cultural and economic diversity, nations in the region are beginning to think, talk and act more and more alike: there is a growing sense of Asia Pacific community, which it is very much in Australia's interests to encourage - and this is a theme I will return to below.

Australia's Middle Power Diplomacy

In a world as complex and rapidly changing as ours now is, it is not easy for any country - whatever its size or clout - to establish and maintain its foreign policy bearings. Even the United States, although standing alone now as indisputably the world's only superpower, has clearly not found it easy to define its national interests, to work out how these inter-relate to those of the world as a whole, and to sort out how best to pursue them unilaterally, bilaterally, regionally and globally.

The task has been no easier for any other country, but I think it would not be going too far to suggest that - so far anyway - we in Australia have managed it with more success than most. One sometimes hears claims - usually from the Opposition, but sometimes from other

commentators - that in foreign policy we have over-reached ourselves, grandstanding around the world to little useful effect on a miscellany of issues which have had little or nothing to do with Australia's national interests. I reject that criticism on all counts. Australian foreign policy under the Labor Government has been driven by a very clear, and clearly defined, sense of national interest; it has been conducted with a wholly realistic appreciation of the scope and limits of our influence; and it has been focused and realistically selective in character. I think it is fair to say that it has also been effective in achieving results - and in building, in the process, both in the region and the world at large, a very positive new image of Australia as a diplomatically active country, conducting a responsible foreign policy with imagination and energy.

In my book on Australia's Foreign Relations: in the World of the 1990s, published two years ago, I characterised the kind of foreign policy we have been crafting and implementing in recent years as "middle power diplomacy with an Asia Pacific orientation". I want to spend a little time tonight spelling out what all that means in general terms, and then following this with some more specific focus on what we are doing both in the Asia Pacific region and on a more global basis.

Australia is a middle power. We are manifestly not a great or even major power; nor, however, as the 11th biggest economy in the world, are we small or insignificant. The company of nations which tend to be so described is relatively limited - a dozen to twenty at most. There are no agreed criteria: it is a matter of balancing out GDP and population size, and perhaps military capacity and physical size as well, then having regard to the perceptions of others.

While middle power diplomacy is ultimately no less self-interested than any other kind, its characteristic methods are these days more often applied to a range of problems which involve the interests of not just a few, but many, nations. Important examples abound in such areas as arms control and disarmament, trade liberalisation, regional conflict resolution and environment protection. Australia, like most other countries, has a self-interested preference for the peaceful resolution of conflict, acceptance of international law, protection of the weak against the strong, and the free exchange of ideas, people and goods. In a world that is increasingly interdependent, the pursuit of a great many of these interests depends on co-operation with others for their fullest satisfaction. The argument is that, in these circumstances, middle powers are as well equipped as anyone else, and in some respects better equipped, to generate acceptable solutions.

The characteristic method of middle power diplomacy is coalition building with 'like-minded' countries. It also usually involves 'niche' diplomacy, which means concentrating resources in specific areas best able to generate returns worth having, rather than trying to cover the field. By definition, middle powers are not powerful enough in most circumstances to impose their will, but they may be persuasive enough to have like-minded others see their point of view, and to act accordingly.

There have been a number of important such like-minded coalitions formed in recent times. There is the Cairns Group of fair trading agricultural countries, with fourteen members drawn from five continents: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Fiji, Hungary, Indonesia, Malaysia, New Zealand, Philippines, Thailand and Uruguay. There is the APEC (Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation) grouping: initially Australia and New Zealand, the six ASEAN countries, Japan and Korea, the United States and Canada, but with these then being joined by the PRC, Taiwan and Hong Kong (and maybe some further entrants at next week's meeting in Seattle). In the case of Cambodia, our coalition building meant working from the outset with Indonesia and the other ASEANs, all five permanent members of the Security Council, Vietnam and the four Cambodian factions themselves. In responding to the evil of apartheid, Australia's coalition has been the Commonwealth itself, and in particular the closely knit group of nine countries which have since 1987 constituted the Committee of Foreign Ministers on Southern Africa (CFMSA): Australia, Canada, Guyana, India, Malaysia, Nigeria, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

It will be evident from these examples that coalitions which Australia has built in recent years, or in which we have been particularly active, are by no means confined in their membership to 'middle power' countries. They often include great or major powers, and those with very much less influence as well. Moreover, the memberships keep changing. Although, for example, trade liberalisation objectives are common to both APEC and the Cairns Group, the countries with whom we made common cause in the former are not all the same as those with whom we have worked in the latter. The point of middle power diplomacy is not who is embraced by it, but how the process of change is initiated and carried through. Coalition building is inherently eclectic: we seek to build in each case the kind of alliance most suited to the particular issue on our international agenda. But the goal is constant: maximising the influence that can be brought to bear by Australia and those countries which share interests with us.

For middle power diplomacy to be effective, a number of conditions have to be met. First, there has to be careful identification of where the opportunities lie for potentially effective action by middle powers. There is no prestige, or likely result, in enthusiastically pursuing ideas which are premature, over-ambitious, or for some other reason unlikely to generate any significant body of support. As ambitious as they were, APEC, the Cairns Group, the UN peace plan for Cambodia - and, to take two other examples, our Antarctic environment initiative, and our successful efforts to bring to fruition the Chemical Weapons Convention - were all examples of ideas whose time had clearly come.

Secondly, there has to be sufficient physical capacity to follow the issue through. This implies a certain minimum of physical resources, including a sufficiently wide network of diplomatic posts, which it may be difficult for any country smaller than a middle power to match. It also means that, for a middle power, there will be a limit to the number of major issues that can be simultaneously pursued: selective 'niche' diplomacy, while often good tactics, is also compelled by realistic necessity. Resources simply have to be concentrated where they are likely to have the most useful impact. Priority setting - involving careful balancing of the importance of the

national interests in question against the practical likelihood of their being advanced - becomes extremely important. Thus, for example, in the vast area embraced by what may be described as the 'new internationalist agenda', Australia has tended to focus its major efforts on three specific areas - human rights, the environment and development cooperation. And in terms of regional issues, we have naturally tended to focus on our own Asia Pacific rather than wider afield. (In the Middle East peace process, for example, we have been active participants in two of the multilateral working groups - on arms control and water resources - because of our particular expertise and experience, but, because of limited resources and the need to prioritise them, we have resisted invitations to become more fully involved across the whole spectrum of current activity.)

The capacity to follow an issue through also involves energy and stamina. Many good ideas, well capable of implementation, fall by the wayside in international affairs simply because institutions, or the individuals who constitute them, tire. One widely acknowledged reason for the impact made, for example, by Australia's UN peace plan for Cambodia was the sheer persistence with which, over a long period, the proposal was followed through at both official and ministerial level.

Thirdly, there has to be in most cases a degree of intellectual imagination and creativity applied to the issue - an ability to see a way through impasses and to lead, if not by force of authority, then at least by force of ideas. The application of physical resources to a problem without accompanying ideas is unlikely to result in anything more than the appearance of activity. Of course, creativity and imagination are not the prerogative of middle powers; nor should they be assumed to exist in the case of any particular middle power. The point is simply that what middle powers may lack in economic, political or military clout, they can often make up with quick and thoughtful diplomatic footwork. And resolution of just about any significant problem in international affairs - be it bilateral or multilateral in character - needs just that.

Finally, effective middle power diplomacy involves credibility on the part of the country in question. The mix of ingredients here will vary from case to case. Perceived independence from the influence of larger powers will often be one such ingredient. The maintenance of credibility is also crucially dependent on avoiding any charge of hypocrisy: any country which preaches abroad what it fails to practise at home cannot expect to be taken very seriously for very long. Thus Australia's domestic commitment to internationalising the economy is crucial to our credibility in the Uruguay Round and APEC; similarly, a poor recent race relations performance here would make it very difficult for us to be heard internationally on apartheid. Nor can double standards be applied abroad: Australia's human rights diplomacy, for example, depends very much for its credibility on both universality in the application of principles, and consistency of approach as between different countries.

Middle powers, simply because they are of less than great or major power status, can occasionally do what great and major powers cannot. It is generally acknowledged that APEC

would have had much more difficulty in getting off the ground if the United States or Japan had been its instigator: each side may have feared the worse of the other, and the smaller powers may well have felt that their own interests were at risk. Similarly, Australia's ability to talk comfortably to every country involved in the Cambodia dispute owed much to the fact that we were not carrying any great or major power baggage. We had no axes to grind, and no immediate interests to protect, other than a genuine desire to see a terrible, protracted conflict ended and regional stability improved accordingly.

Australia's Asia Pacific Priorities

I have referred to Australia's middle power diplomacy as having a strong Asia Pacific orientation, and that should have become evident already from a number of the examples I have been giving. There are a number of good reasons why we should be making so much these days of our relationships in our own part of the world, and why we should be saying, as we do so often, that we see our future as being more determined by our geography than by our history.

The first reason is simply the economic imperative. The Asia Pacific region as a whole already accounts for around 40 per cent of world trade and 50 per cent of its production, and East Asia (even with the recession in Japan) is by far the fastest growing part of the whole. We already send more than 60 per cent of our exports to the Asian countries to our north, and South East Asia recently displaced the whole of the EC as an Australian export market. Trade and investment opportunities - in sophisticated services and high value-added manufactures as well as traditional commodities - are enormous. It is not a matter of turning away from our traditional economic partners in Europe and North America: rather it is a matter of realising that for the foreseeable future, the action overwhelmingly is going to be much closer to home.

Secondly, it is a matter of recognising that in the post-Cold War world, traditional alliance relationships are not going to have nearly the all-embracing significance they used to, and that in many ways we are going to have to guarantee our security future by diplomatic and defence strategies that are very much more of our own making. That implies a much more substantial effort than we made in the Cold War years to build comfortable and confident cooperative relationships throughout our region.

A third important development is the way in which transnational or 'third tier' issues have come to feature so largely in the international agenda. I refer to issues like cross-border environment problems, unregulated population flows, international terrorism, the narcotics trade and health problems like AIDS, which by their nature are beyond the capacity of any one country by itself to control. As common problems emerge, crying out for cooperative solutions, so too does the need to develop ever more close relations with one's neighbours.

The Asia Pacific region - if one defines it to include the whole of East Asia, Oceania and North

America (and on some accounts the Pacific Coast of South America as well) - unquestionably it is one of the most diverse in the world. It is all the more fascinating, then, that there should be emerging so rapidly, as I have already suggested, a very real sense of Asia Pacific 'community'. It is very much in Australia's interests that such a sense of community should emerge, for this of course is a community of which - on any definition - we are unequivocally a part: not an outsider looking in, but an active, recognised partner.

There are now two particularly important manifestations of that sense of community. The most visible of them is the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) process, which we initiated in 1989. APEC is now accepted both within the region and around the world as the Asia Pacific region's pre-eminent economic forum. It not only embraces the fifteen major economies of the region, but builds a very firm institutional bridge across the Pacific in a way that operates as a very useful counterweight to some of the dangerous pressures for division between North America and East Asia, particularly between the United States and Japan.

APEC has already grown, with Australia continuing to do a lot of the fertilising, beyond its cautious beginnings as a kind of regional OECD, focusing initially on data compilation and exchanges of policy views, and with a gradually evolving program of economic cooperation in particular sectors like minerals and energy, and human resource development. The emphasis now is on working rapidly towards the achievement of major trade facilitation, with the focus on very practical issues like common technical standards, mutual recognition of qualifications, customs harmonisation, removal of non-tariff barriers to trade, and achievement of significant commonality in investment rules, all within the framework of intellectual commitment to 'open regionalism' (that is, regionally based economic cooperation, trade facilitation and liberalisation - but pursued in the context of a larger commitment to a free and open global trade and investment environment).

Early last year, Australian Prime Minister Paul Keating proposed periodic meetings of APEC leaders as a way of injecting more political momentum - or 'horsepower', as he put it - into the organisation. That suggestion has now come to life with President Clinton's hosting of just such a meeting in Seattle next week. Two thousand of the world's press are expected to be present for this meeting - and for the Ministerial meeting preceding it at which Trade Minister Peter Cook and I will be representing Australia. All going well, we will next week be taking a major step forward, not just in the consolidation of a Cooperation process but in the establishment of a genuine Asia Pacific Economic Community.

The other important context in which a sense of community has been emerging in our region is security. The Asia Pacific is at the moment not only the most prosperous region in the world, but just about the most peaceful. Our task is to take advantage of this atmosphere - which can't necessarily be presumed to last - to make sure it stays that way. We have seen this as best accomplished by building new processes of dialogue and cooperation to embrace all the region's major security players, including all those countries traditionally hostile towards, or nervous about, each other.

Australia has played a significant role over the last few years in that process, although in a much lower profile way than for APEC. When I first floated, nearly four years ago, the possibility of the evolution in the Asia Pacific region of a new regional architecture - modelled very loosely on the emerging Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) - to respond to new security realities of the post-Cold War world, I met with a less than enthusiastic response from my US counterpart James Baker: why did we need any new multilateral approaches when our old bilateral alliance structures had served us so well for so long? But times have changed, in Washington and everywhere else. What seemed very radical propositions just three or four years ago have now become almost the regional orthodoxy. The most important development has undoubtedly been the creation, in Singapore in July this year, of the new ASEAN Regional Forum on security issues - a forum that brings together not only the members of ASEAN and their traditional dialogue partners but also the other major regional security players, in particular Russia, China and Vietnam.

Some of the themes which we expect that Forum to be considering in the years ahead are the strengthening of preventive diplomacy processes; the establishment and strengthening of weapons non-proliferation regimes; and the development of a variety of trust building measures, including transparency in matters to do with arms acquisition, force structures and strategic assessments.

Australia's Global Priorities

It is a logical corollary of Australia's status as a middle power that we should always have been strongly committed to effective multilateral institutions - especially the United Nations, the only fully empowered body with global membership that we have. Middle powers, and smaller ones as well, by definition may need to find comfort in collective responses and rule-based international systems - in a way that may not be so necessary for countries with the clout of major powers, great powers, or super powers.

In the post-Cold War world, with the removal of the ideological posturing and manoeuvring that so often vetoed Security Council action or made other international negotiations impossible, expectations of international institutions and processes delivering positive results have never been higher. To some extent those expectations have been realised: there have been major breakthroughs in nuclear arms control negotiations; the Chemical Weapons Convention has been signed; the UN has had some conspicuous peace keeping successes in Namibia and Cambodia; and the world did mobilise under UN auspices to repel the outrageous invasion by of Kuwait by Iraq, sending an important signal in the process to other would-be aggressors.

But at the same time there have been less happy results with UN operations in Angola, Somalia, the former Yugoslavia and elsewhere; the GATT Round of trade negotiations, as it nears its final hours, is still not certain of success despite the enormous stakes involved; and

there is a continuing fragility about the world's support for its multilateral institutions: as evidenced for example by the continuing great difficulties the UN is having in getting paid by its member states. This phenomenon was recently well described by James Woollacott in The Guardian, writing in the context of the recent Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting:

The grave problem we face today is that of the general frailty of collective ideas and organisations of all kinds, whether it is the one world of the UN, the free trade of the GATT or the pan-European ideals of the Community. The problems of the Commonwealth, in this context, are part of the general crisis of collective, multinational associations in the world, all of them subject to hypercritical scrutiny by politicians and governments setting national and local interest against what is deemed to be woolly idealism, outdated notions, power relations that have long since been eclipsed, or worse, others trying to lord it over them. If it won't bring them a vote in Kansas or Tasmania or clinch a deal in Kanu or Timbuctoo, then they balk. Worse, if attacking multinational associations will bring them a vote, they have little compunction.

We in Australia have been trying to think hard and constructively about this problem. We want to restore the credibility and effectiveness of the UN over the whole range of its functions, and particularly in its peace and security role. Self-help and bilateral alliances and regional arrangements can take any country - and especially middle powers - only part of the way. In the world of the 1990s and beyond, fluid and uncertain as it is going to be, we will need all the help we can get from the global collective security system the UN was intended to be.

Australia's contribution to the very lively international debate now going on about these issues is embodied in my book, Cooperating for Peace, which was launched a few weeks ago in New York at the United Nations General Assembly. The book sets out to do essentially three things. First, we have tried to bring some conceptual clarity into the discussion of the UN's role, so that there is less chance of decision-makers, in the Security Council and elsewhere, talking past each other when they use terminology like "peace keeping", "peace making" and "peace enforcement", and more chance of them agreeing, quickly and decisively, what kind of international response is appropriate for different kinds of international security problem.

Secondly, we have tried to establish some common criteria for determining when, where, how, for how long, at what cost and at whose cost the UN should become involved in different kinds of peace operation. Had there been more clarity of thinking about some of these issues, there may have been less chance of the international community getting caught up in the kind of muddled incrementalism that has, for the most part unhappily, characterised its involvement in a number of present conflicts, including Somalia and the former Yugoslavia.

Thirdly, we have tried to focus sharply on necessary reform priorities for the UN itself, including restructuring its Secretariat; resolving its funding problems; improving its management of

peace operations; and reshaping its priorities so as to place more emphasis on such areas as preventive diplomacy and peace building.

It is too early yet to say what effect this effort of ours will have. While a great many of the themes I have just sketched have been the subject of much attention in learned books and journals and newspaper articles and reports, Australia's "Blue Book" has been widely acknowledged as one of the first really serious and systematic attempts to bring all these issues together in a comprehensive and up-to-date way, and certainly the first such attempt to be made by a UN member Government.

I don't know whether Zelman Cowen would want to acknowledge any paternity for any of these particular ideas, or the general approach to international affairs which gave them birth. But I would certainly want to acknowledge myself that some of the commitment I have to applying tough-minded reason to the solution of intractable problems; some of the belief I have in the power of well-crafted words to persuade; some of the faith I have in the force and relevance of liberal and humanitarian values in the world of international affairs; and, above all, some of the confidence I have about Australia's place in the world, and our capacity to influence the world for the better, owes more than just a little to the teaching, and the inspiration, of the man whom this inaugural lecture honours tonight.

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