

THE UNITED NATIONS : COOPERATING FOR PEACE

Address to the Forty Eighth General Assembly of the United Nations by
Senator Gareth Evans, Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs, New York, 27
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I warmly congratulate you, Ambassador Insanally, on your election as President of this Forty-Eighth Session of the General Assembly. As a fellow Commonwealth member with Guyana, Australia is very pleased to serve in the Assembly under your Presidency. This session of the General Assembly will deal with a particularly heavy and important agenda. It will do so at a time when hopes for, and expectations of, the United Nations have never been greater - but when, at the same time, many doubts have been raised about the capacity of the UN system to cope. We will be relying very much on your wisdom and experience as you preside over our deliberations.

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 - either between themselves, or with the rest of the world's trading nations - about the GATT trade liberalisation measures so necessary to give a new kick-start 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 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 so often.

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: we could help to make it even more so by adopting by consensus a resolution in this Assembly supporting the negotiation of that treaty, while the current moratorium on all nuclear testing is 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.

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 proliferation 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 are being 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, we should all be prepared to acknowledge and 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.

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, this month's peace agreement in 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 is imminent, as testified last week in this place by Nelson Mandela. 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 Myanmar, or 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.

But while I don't believe we should be unduly pessimistic or fatalistic about the condition of the world around us, nor can we afford to be complacent. There is much more that we can and should be doing to reinforce and

strengthen the international community's capacity to govern itself better - and in particular to better guarantee the maintenance of peace and security in the post-Cold War world. It is on this subject - the role of the UN and the international community generally in securing peace in the world of the 1990s

and beyond - that I want to specifically focus my remarks today.

Agenda for Peace: Unresolved Issues

A little over a year ago, following a unique meeting of the Security Council, Secretary-General Boutros Ghali published *An Agenda for Peace*. It was, and remains, a remarkable document, one which poses most of the questions we need to address if we are to have a fair chance of maintaining international peace and security in the world of today and the foreseeable future. Since that time a world-wide debate has taken place on the issues described in *An Agenda for Peace*, which has involved not only governments and officials, but reached out to embrace universities, foundations, non-government organisations and many organs of the public media as well. This debate has generated resolutions at the last session of the General Assembly, several worthwhile changes to some procedures and structures within the Secretariat, and the prospect of further changes to come.

It cannot be said, however, that the issues raised by *An Agenda for Peace* are now all settled, either in theory or in practice. We still do not have even a completely clear and consistent shared vocabulary to define the ways in which it is possible for the UN, and other organs of the international community, to respond to security problems: 'peace making', for example, means different things to different people; so does 'preventive diplomacy', and 'peace building'; the conceptual boundary line between 'peace keeping' and 'peace enforcement' is not drawn in the same way by everyone who uses these terms.

Nor do we seem yet to have clear and universal agreement even as to the kind of problems which justify a security response by the international community. Should we recognise, for example, a 'humanitarian right of intervention' and, if so, in what circumstances and to what extent? When does an economic or

social problem become the kind of security problem which justifies the mobilisation of the response strategies spelt out in Chapters VI and VII of the UN Charter?

Even when it comes to applying a very familiar response to a new problem - for example, establishing a peace keeping operation like the 30 which have

now been initiated since 1946 - there is not yet a commonly accepted check list of criteria to guide decision-makers in determining when precisely the operation should be set in train, how it should be structured, managed and resourced, and how long it should continue. Every situation, of course, has its own characteristics, but is it really necessary for decisions on these matters by the Security Council or others to be made on so evidently ad hoc a basis?

When it comes to thinking about how the UN - and others in the international community, including regional organisations - might best be structured, organised, managed and funded to most effectively address the international peace and security agenda, it is not clear to me that we have yet heard the last word in the debate. An extraordinary amount has been achieved, in the tumultuous period since 1989, in responding to the new demands and challenges that have been unceasingly hurled at the UN. But a good deal more remains to be done if the UN in particular - the only fully empowered body with global membership that we have - is to be as effective as we would all want it to be.

Cooperating for Peace

It is much easier, of course, to ask all these questions than to answer them: identifying problems is always easier than defining acceptable solutions. But I believe that we all have a responsibility to each other and the international community to try to answer these questions, and to keep on working away at the answers until we find common ground. It is in that spirit that I put before you today a detailed study of these questions, which tries to answer them in a way which might help us find a little more of that common ground.

The study, in the form of a book entitled *Cooperating for Peace*, has been distributed to delegations as I speak. I don't pretend for a moment that it says the last word on any of the enormously complex and sensitive issues with which it deals: it is simply an Australian contribution to the debate which was so thoughtfully and constructively initiated by the Secretary-General last year.

The study before you seeks to do three things in particular. First, it suggests ways of bringing a little more clarity - to the extent this is presently lacking - into the concepts and vocabulary we use in defining security problems,

defining possible responses, and matching responses to problems. Secondly, it suggests specific criteria that might be applied by decision-makers in deciding what, if any, response is appropriate to a particular new security problem. And thirdly, it suggests a priority list of areas in which further UN reform might usefully be pursued. In the short time that remains to me, I will try to give a quick outline sketch of what we are trying to say in each of these respects.

On the issue of concepts and terminology, it is perhaps worth making the point at the outset that this is not just something for academics to wrangle about: it matters in practice. If decision-makers don't share the same basic way of looking at issues, and the same basic vocabulary in defining them, there is a very real risk that they will talk past each other - or at the very least, find it very much harder to produce responses which are timely, properly graduated, effective in practice, affordable and broadly consistent from one case to the next.

Just as importantly, the choice of words can sometimes significantly influence the way in which we think about matters of substance. To give just one example: if we use, as many people still do, the expression 'peace making' to describe military enforcement action, then - simply because this is such an innocuous and constructive sounding expression - there is a danger that we may over time become a little more relaxed than we should be about taking such action. It is much better, I suggest, to confine 'peace making' to diplomatic-type activity to resolve conflict; reserving the expression 'peace enforcement' to describe the always dangerous and messy - and what should be last-resort - activity of applying military force.

In the study we define security problems, in more or less escalating order of seriousness, as 'emerging threats', 'disputes', 'armed conflicts' and 'other major security crisis'. We make the point that security is not strictly or solely a military concept, and that threats to security can come these days very much from factors such as exploding population pressures, environmental degradation, mass involuntary movements of people and the illicit narcotics trade.

Equally, we define possible responses to security problems - in escalating order of severity - in terms of 'peace building', 'preventive diplomacy',

'preventive deployment', 'peace making', 'peace keeping', 'sanctions' and 'peace enforcement'. We are at pains to emphasise that it is only as a last resort that security solutions should be seen as coming out of the barrel of a gun. We give much more emphasis than has been common elsewhere to the concept of 'peace building', which we define as extending not just to post-conflict economic development and institution-building strategies, but to a whole variety of preventive strategies - both within particular countries, and in the form of international treaty-type regimes addressing both military and non-military threats to security.

In defining criteria for embarking on peace operations - whether peace keeping or peace enforcement - the most crucial consideration is that there be a clear-minded focus on the objectives of the exercise, and the likely effectiveness of the operation in achieving them. No operations of this kind should ever be embarked upon for the sake of 'being seen to be doing something'. Although it is not always possible to analyse or predict with certainty, it should always be possible to avoid embarking on operations which are manifestly likely to be ineffective - and which, as such, put at risk the most crucial UN resource of all, its credibility.

In the case of peace keeping, we suggest in *Cooperating for Peace* that there are seven basic conditions for ensuring an effective operation: clear and achievable goals; adequate resources; close coordination of peace keeping with any ongoing peace making activity; a capacity to be, and be seen to be, absolutely impartial as between the parties who have been in conflict; a significant degree of local support for the peace keepers; evident support for the operation from external powers who may have been involved previously in

supporting one side or the other; and a 'signposted exit', i.e. a clearly designated termination point, or set of termination criteria.

When it comes to peace enforcement operations, the criteria for determining involvement that we suggest are quite complex, and vary according to whether the operation is one in response to cross-border aggression (as with Iraq and Kuwait), or in support of peace keeping operations (the basic rationale for UN involvement in Bosnia-Herzegovina) or in support of

humanitarian objectives (as in Somalia). Without going into the necessary detail now, the basic considerations come down to these: widespread international support; clear and achievable goals; adequate total resources to meet those goals; and clearly defined termination or review points.

If the UN is to play, with maximum effectiveness, the central role it needs to in maintaining international peace and security, then further change - further reform - in the system really is necessary. Some of that change is bound to be painful for some people, but that is the way of change. Putting it simply and starkly, unless the UN develops a comprehensive capacity to address today's and tomorrow's problems - not yesterday's - there is a real risk of it gradually losing, with governments and peoples around the world, the credibility it needs to survive.

In the study before you, we identify seven priority areas for change. The first is to restructure the Secretariat to ensure that the Secretary-General has an effective chain of command exercising authority over major UN operations, and to consolidate and coordinate in a more orderly and manageable way the present sprawl of departments and agencies. We support the proposal that the Secretary-General create a new senior structure at UN Headquarters, under which he would have four Deputy Secretaries-General responsible respectively for Peace and Security, Economic and Social Operations, Humanitarian Operations and Administration and Management. Each such Deputy would have full executive responsibility for the operational issues falling within his or her portfolio, subject only to direction by the Secretary-General. This is a big change, and it is not the first time it has been proposed, but it is the one that, more than anything else, would create the conditions for more orderly and effective management throughout the UN system.

The second priority need is to resolve once and for all the UN's critical funding problem. Various adventurous ideas have been canvassed for external funding, and we suggest that at least one of them - a small levy on international airline travel - be further explored. But overwhelmingly the problem is one that has been created by member states - including the richest of our number - and is entirely within our ability to resolve by meeting our assessed contributions for regular budgets and peace operations in full and on time. It is an abuse of good management principles and basic common sense

to be forcing the Secretary-General to spend so much of his time pleading for debts to be honoured. If the bulk of current arrears were to be paid by the end of this year, the UN's finances would be in a quite healthy position, with the Working Capital Fund, the Peace Keeping Reserve Fund and the Special Account all replenished, and the UN in a position to meet all outstanding troop contribution costs.

The third priority is to improve the management of peace operations, both at Headquarters and in the field. Some very significant and useful steps have been taken in this regard in the context of the creation of the new Department of Peace Operations, but more remains to be done, including in particular the development over time of a properly constituted General Staff to plan and manage the military dimensions of such operations.

The fourth priority is to give special attention to the machinery of preventive diplomacy, again both at Headquarters and in the field. These efforts have been largely ad hoc in the past, although the Department of Political Affairs is gradually building a core of appropriate expertise. Quite apart from anything else, there is an overwhelming cost advantage in doing more to stop disputes becoming armed conflicts. We estimate the cost of keeping 100 well qualified preventive diplomacy practitioners in the field at \$21 million annually; compare that with this year's peace operations budget of \$3.7 billion - and the \$70 billion that it is estimated to have cost the UN coalition to fight the six-week Gulf War.

The fifth priority is to re-think the system of humanitarian relief coordination. Despite advances that have been made with the creation of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, we think some basic structural problems remain. We propose that they be addressed in a rather radical way by the creation of a new disaster response agency - combining the relief and basic rehabilitation functions of UNHCR, UNICEF and WFP - which would work directly to the suggested Deputy Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs.

The sixth priority, as we see it, is to take various steps to raise the profile within the UN system of peace building. This is the point of intersection between the UN's peace and security role and its economic and social role,

and it should be given recognition and emphasis as such. The pursuit of peace and security has to include the satisfaction of basic human needs as well as the direct prevention, containment and settlement of armed conflict. Much of the UN system is in fact concerned with peace building in the form of activities such as international law making, disarmament, economic and social advancement, sustainable development, democratisation and institution building. But much more can be done, organisationally, to link these activities together, recognise their security significance and ensure that they are pursued with a sense of common purpose.

The remaining priority, a very large subject in itself, is to regenerate the Security Council - not because it is now working ineffectively, but because its manifest lack of representativeness is beginning to impact on its legitimacy. The Security Council is the lynch-pin of the whole UN peace and security system, and it is in no-one's interest that its credibility should be allowed to gradually erode. The outstanding questions about the size and shape of the Council should certainly be resolved by the time of the UN's 50th Anniversary in 1995: this indeed remains an ideal target date for the achievement of a whole range of necessary organisational reforms.

Running right through the study before you - and underlying all our suggestions about structure and process - is a single, sustaining idea, that of cooperative security. This embraces within it two perhaps more familiar ideas, common security and collective security. The overall flavour of 'cooperative security' can perhaps best be captured by describing it as an approach which emphasises reassurance rather than deterrence; is inclusive rather than exclusive; favours multilateralism over unilateralism or bilateralism; does not rank military solutions over non-military ones; assumes that states are the principal actors in the security system but accepts that non-state actors have an important role to play; does not particularly emphasise the creation of formal security institutions, but does not reject them either; and which, above all, stresses the value of creating habits of dialogue.

A good deal of the spirit of cooperative security is to be found in the United Nations Charter itself. Article 1.4 of the Charter, a provision much neglected in the past, designates the United Nations as 'a centre for harmonising the actions of nations' - not their sentiments, but their actions. In Articles 55 and

56, member states pledge themselves to create the 'conditions of stability and well-being which are necessary for peaceful and friendly relations among nations': underscored in this context are the promotion of higher standards of living, the solution of economic and social problems, and respect for human rights.

Too often during the Cold War we looked past these obligations and concerns, because we were preoccupied with military means of survival. But the threats which concerned us then no longer exist - and what was written in San Francisco, before the Cold War froze our capacity to deal with many other kinds of threat to security, should be seen now as a compelling guide.

Our survival in the 1990s and beyond will depend on our developing a new understanding of what constitutes security, and what contributes to it. It will depend on our capacity to think clearly about how to react to new security problems as they arrive. It will depend on our willingness to rethink and reshape our institutions, including the UN, so they can cope with new realities. But, above all, it will depend on us all developing and sustaining a real commitment to cooperating for peace.