

UNITED
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'Blue book' offers blueprint for world security

By Sam Leone

While expectations of the United Nations (UN) system remained high, the world community seriously questioned its capacity to deliver peace and security, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Senator Gareth Evans, told the National Press Club in Canberra on 2 September.

In an effort to offer some systematic answers to the problem, he will launch a 220-page book, dubbed the "blue book" when he addresses the UN General Assembly on 27 September.

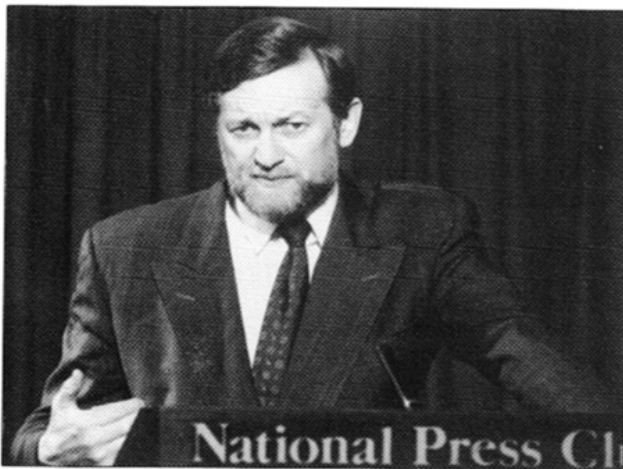
Entitled *Cooperating for Peace: the Global Agenda for the 1990s and Beyond*, Senator Evans wrote the book in collaboration with a "large team" drawn from his department and personal staff.

"I think we, in Australia, with a record of commitment to these ideals going right back to the 1940s, are rather well placed to help the game along," Senator Evans said.

He told the National Press Club the book sought to reestablish "conceptual bearings" to get a sense of what were possible and desirable principles of international community intervention in security situations.

"The UN administration has to get its act together rather better than has been the case in the past," Senator Evans said.

"I say that not in any spirit of criticism about those people in the UN system who have been



Senator Evans at the National Press Club in Canberra: his "blue book" will offer systematic answers on how the UN can better meet world expectations of its security role. (DFAT Overseas Information Branch photograph by Norman

really working against insuperable organisational and resources odds and who have been doing a huge number of things since the end of the Cold War and since this exploding of demand on peace makers, peace keepers and peace enforcers.

"But there are many more organisational changes, rather different approaches to the process, some more things which can be done on the financial side that will make it all work rather better than it has in the past."

He said a chapter of the "blue book" was devoted to pulling these threads together and made "sharply focused" recommendations.

"Underlying all of that is the need to maintain the strong global sense, the strong cooperative security instinct - which are described in this book - and a strong commitment to collective, cooperative ways in reacting to these situations, rather than reverting to power balances and strongest influence."

Senator Evans said that while some of the optimism in world peace-keeping had ebbed, given the situation in the former Yugoslavia and the continuing problems in Somalia, there had been obvious successes like Cambodia.

Humanitarian issues

He said it was important to develop and maintain the culture which had given the UN system opportunities to make a huge and positive difference on humanitarian and other issues.

"Certainly that's the premise in which I have been occupying myself with help of a lot of very good people from the Department over the last six months," he said.

"I believe that if a systematic community assault can be made on the structure and processes and financial administration of the UN, in a constructive way...if a really major effort can be made, then I think it will flow through rather rapidly into a much better perception of the UN and its role."

Senator Evans said it would be a major task to generate a new intellectual consensus internationally about the proper scope and limits of the UN's peace and security role and about the way in which the international community generally should respond to particular kinds of security problems, ranging from emerging threats to armed conflicts and other major crises.

"In many ways, it will be an even harder task to achieve consensus about the kind of practical structural, administrative and financial reforms that will be necessary if the system is to work better.

"But we haven't been reluctant to chance our arm on some very big issues in recent years, and

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