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(United Nations Subcommittee)

Reference: Australia's relations with the United Nations in the post Cold War environment

FRIDAY, 7 JULY 2000

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JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENCE AND TRADE

United Nations Subcommittee

Friday, 7 July 2000

Members: Senator Ferguson *(Chair)*, Mr Hollis (*Deputy Chair*), Senators Bourne, Brownhill, Calvert, Chapman, Cook, Gibbs, Harradine, O'Brien, Payne, Quirke and Schacht and Fran Bailey, Mr Baird, Mr Brereton, Mr Laurie Ferguson, Mr Hawker, Mr Jull, Mrs De-Anne Kelly, Mr Lieberman, Mr Martin, Mrs Moylan, Mr Nugent, Mr O'Keefe, Mr Price, Mr Prosser, Mr Pyne, Mr Snowdon, Dr Southcott and Mr Andrew Thomson

Subcommittee members: Senator Ferguson *(Chair)*, Mr Hollis *(Deputy Chair)*, Senators Bourne, Chapman, Gibbs, Harradine, Payne, Quirke and Schacht and Mr Baird, Mrs Crosio, Mr Jull, Mrs Moylan, Mr Nugent, Mr Price, Mr Snowdon and Dr Southcott

Senators and members in attendance: Senators Bourne, Ferguson and Payne and Mrs Crosio, Mr Hollis and Dr Southcott

Terms of reference for the inquiry:

To inquire into and report on the role of the United Nations and Australia's relationship with the organisation in the post Cold War environment, with particular reference to:

- The increasing demand for and provision of peacekeeping operations to address internal disputes within states and the subsequent need for humanitarian relief and support for refugees;
- The role of the United Nations in the period of transition following peacekeeping operations and in the reconstruction of civil societies;
- The implications of increasing intervention in internal disputes for national sovereignty, as defined under Article 2 of the Charter of the UN;
- The suitability of developing a standing army for the United Nations;
- The possible devolution of responsibility for restoring and maintaining peace to regionally based UN operations and coalitions of the willing;
- The capacity of the UN to protect human rights as a basic requirement of the Charter, as preventive diplomacy and to address war crimes and crimes of genocide;
- The viability of the International Criminal Court;
- The proposals for reform of the structure of the UN, in particular the Security Council, the specialised agencies, the supporting bureaucracy and the relationship between the security and humanitarian/human rights arms of the organisation;
- The funding shortfall; and
- Australia's role in and response to the United Nations

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WITNESSES

Subcommittee met at 9.32 a.m.

CHAIR—I declare open this public hearing of the United Nations Subcommittee of the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade. This is our fifth hearing in an inquiry presently being conducted by the subcommittee into Australia's relationship with the United Nations and the prospects for reform of the United Nations in the post-Cold War world. We have already held several public hearings in Canberra, Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne and received several briefings, most notably from the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr Kofi Annan, and from Australia's permanent representative at the United Nations, Ms Penny Wensley.

Much criticism has been levelled at the United Nations in recent years. Conflicts within nation states have escalated and, consequently, pressure has mounted on the United Nations for humanitarian intervention. The efforts of the UN have had mixed success. Wars within states do not fit neatly within the charter of the United Nations or within the traditional views of non-intervention in international relations. The Secretary-General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, has flagged the need for the UN to reconsider the definitions of national sovereignty and self-determination and the way in which the organisation responds to crises. As its agenda increases, pressure has mounted on the United Nations to restructure and reform its operations and its inadequate funding arrangements.

The aim of our inquiry is to consider the role of the United Nations within the changed circumstances of the post-Cold War environment and the response of the Australian government to arguments for structural, procedural and financial reform of the UN. A final hearing will be held in Canberra at a later date, and the committee hopes to contribute to the debate and make recommendations to the government early next year. We have come to Adelaide today to take evidence from those organisations and individuals with an interest in the United Nations. We look forward to hearing your opinions on the work of the UN and the prospects for its reform.

[9.34 a.m.]

PAK POY, Sister Patricia Geraldine, National Coordinator, Australian Network of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines

CHAIR—I must advise you that the proceedings here today are legal proceedings of the parliament and warrant the same respect which proceedings in the respective houses of parliament demand. Although the subcommittee does not require you to give evidence on oath, you should be aware that this does not alter the importance of the occasion. The deliberate misleading of the subcommittee may be regarded as a contempt of parliament. The subcommittee also prefers that all evidence is given in public but, should you at any stage wish to give any evidence in private, you may ask to do so and the committee will consider that request. We have received your submission and it has been authorised for publication. Do you wish to make any additions or corrections to that submission?

Sister Pak Poy—No, that is sufficient for beginning.

CHAIR—Then I invite you to make a short opening statement before we proceed to questions.

Sister Pak Poy—Mr Chairman and committee members, as the coordinator of the international campaign branch in Australia, the Australian network, I speak out of the interest in our relationship with the United Nations on this particular issue and hence the submission is somewhat limited. However, there are other comments I will make in speaking to the recommendations. If I am permitted, I would like to submit some photographs for the viewing of the panel, simply to indicate the problem of landmines. It will give you an indication of the range of activity in which the government has to relate to the United Nations. I would like also to submit a brochure for identification of the network.

CHAIR—Certainly.

Sister Pak Poy—The photographs come as background and are mainly on rehabilitation, but you will, I am sure, see the extent of the scope of the relationship.

On the matter of recommendations, I would like simply to read those through and comment and then be open to questions. The first one deals with Australia and the Conference on Disarmament. We have recommended that the Australian government cease wasting effort through the CD and not attempt to gain a limited agreement on the transfer of anti-personnel mines. This is a recommendation specifically on this issue because we have been waiting in fact for three years to have landmines brought to the agenda of the CD and it has not been possible to have the topic introduced. Worse than that, the CD has not been able to agree on a working agenda.

Secondly, we want the government to devote full effort to working with other governments in the corridors of the UN and elsewhere—using all fora possible—towards a total ban on landmines by the year 2005 involving the cessation of production and transfer of anti-personnel

mines and the destruction of all stockpiles. This is a request for government to use whatever influence it has in the UN, both using the UN fora and outside of it to promote something that is of humanitarian interest and not confined to military protocols and policy.

Thirdly, the Australian government should table our concerns with governments of the following countries which have not signed the Ottawa treaty in the UN. They should do it in the UN and in bilateral discussions on trade investment and other exchanges. We have named those countries as China, India, Laos, Myanmar, Pakistan, Russia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, USA and Vietnam. Those particular countries are singled out because with the USA, Russia and China we have three members of the permanent Security Council, and the campaign deems it most regrettable that these three countries have not seen fit to promote a total ban which has now been signed by 137 countries. We have a particular interest in our region. The non-signatories in the South East Asian region include Laos, Myanmar Burma, Singapore and Vietnam. And because of the extended interest in South Asia we have included Sri Lanka, India and Pakistan.

The fourth recommendation is we wish the government to develop stronger programs with the UNHCR and other agencies to assist repatriation and rehabilitation of refugees to areas cleared of mines. We are raising here the question of clearance and rehabilitation, and that is one aspect of policy and practice in our international relations, so it will not only take into account the migration and defence policies but look to the law pertaining to refugees under the Geneva conventions. We will be calling for some review of that, particularly for Australia's practice.

The fifth recommendation is that, where reform or initiatives are blocked within the UN by other political considerations outside our control, the government take the initiative for action outside the UN structures, noting with confidence the achievement of the Ottawa process. We understand that the Ottawa process was an initiative that was without precedent in the way that it incorporated open consultation with non-government organisations and the other groups in civil society. It was of particular interest because questions of disarmament were related to national security, as we were told, and non-government people were excluded from that. That happened right throughout the review conference on the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons or the Inhumane Weapons Convention. It indicated very strongly the need for some reform of the procedures and processes of the United Nations. If I have an opportunity later, I could talk about some of those too as I experienced them when attending the meetings of the review. We believe it is to Australia's credit that, given the opportunity to include a non-government person on the government delegation to the CCW review, we not only took that initiative but gave encouragement to other countries to do so, and some did.

When I am speaking of the role of the non-government organisations, I think the Ottawa process has been one which really indicates how the United Nations' structures could be changed to make maximum use of, and benefit accrue to, the discussions. So, while I am talking about civil society, I could also throw in that it would be very good, for example, if there were different funding arrangements which would allow developing nations and small nations to have some greater equity and equality of representation in those fora because at the moment its ability to have representation is regulated I do believe by funding, almost by the GDP of a particular country. So we have the more affluent countries having big delegations and the not so affluent countries being confined to a single person who is on the mission, or to nobody. As we

know, much of the work is done informally in corridors, so if you have a small representation, that is a disadvantage to actual negotiations.

With the civil society, we have information from the field and a much more accurate definition of the problems that they would be seeing in the field, particularly in conflict areas. We want also to see that there will be good consultation on the coordinated programs, and the mine action programs across the world give an example of how that can be better coordinated if there is good consultation with non-government sectors. With that, we have the possibility of clarifying what is humanitarian and its impact on national security in a realistic way. In that way, it is a strengthening of civil society, especially in those countries where, because of a particular history and regime, we do not have as strong an influence as might be required when we are facing the conflicts of the present time.

CHAIR—Thank you. In your submission to the inquiry, you are quite critical of the Conference on Disarmament. You suggest that the Australian government should cease wasting efforts through that Conference on Disarmament and not attempt to gain a limited agreement on the transfers of antipersonnel mines. How do you expect to achieve a total ban on antipersonnel land mines if, as you suggest, it is impossible to achieve even a limited ban on transfers of antipersonnel mines at the Conference on Disarmament? If we cannot get anywhere there, how do you see us being able to get a total ban on land mines in other forums?

Sister Pak Poy—May I clarify, firstly, that in this recommendation we are saying it is wasting effort in the CD on the mines question, as distinct from the other issues that are handled in the CD. We would be suggesting as in recommendations B and C that, because the CD is very slow in its processes, we look for other fora. The next one that is coming up will be the next review session of the CCW—that is, the inhumane weapons convention—which is to take place at the end of this year or the beginning of next year. If we work through that one, that is another possibility of working at policy level to see if we can bring about some change in the present protocol 2 of the convention. That deals with the use of land mines, other incendiary devices and so forth. That convention does not have a large number of state parties, but it is sufficient to generate discussion because many of the countries come as observers. That is one more forum.

The other is to pursue, as we have said within C, that we take the initiative to engage with other countries that are non-signatories, and that can be at every level. It needs to be done at every level, from government to government level, ministerial level and through to the middle order and civil society level. With a concerted effort, it is using a different dynamic because we are outside the strictures of the United Nations CD as it is at the moment.

The other way that is open to us, I think, and which has not been explored so much yet, is how a new group could be set up, much as the Ottawa treaty group was set up as it started, with people being forced to rethink the situation and saying, 'What else can we do?' It was to start with eight governments' representatives coming together to talk through what were other possibilities, which would be to make another forum. As well as that, we have the other meetings that the government plays a role in. We have APEC; we have the ARF, the regional forum in Asia. I have just come back from a meeting of the Institute of Strategic and International Studies, so there are those groups where government and non-government people

work so that there can be built some kind of momentum for those countries that are now non-signatory.

CHAIR—Thank you.

Dr SOUTHCOTT—I want to ask you about what you think of Australia's role in the campaign to ban landmines, both through the Ottawa agreement and also through practical assistance like offering Australian Defence Force personnel to undertake mine clearing in Cambodia, for example.

Sister PAK POY—I am very happy to say that we have seen, over the time of the campaign, the shift in Australian policy from six years ago when Australia with most countries was saying, 'No, these mines are legitimate weapons', to now where Australia has taken the policy decision under the convention never to use, produce, stockpile or encourage others to do the same with antipersonnel mines. As well as that, the government has put in place a mine action program, and we are most appreciative of that. It pledged $100 million over a 10- or 11-year period, and that now is being implemented. We have had military men doing mine clearance, and we have gained quite a reputation, I think, as in Mozambique, Afghanistan and Cambodia. So the track record has been good. We have even destroyed all the stockpiles three years ahead of time, so that also is good. At the present time the situation is quite good.

The campaign is concerned about what happens now. We do not yet have a global ban so we really must attend to the work of getting the non-signatories in and also work with the non-state entities or armed groups. That requires not only work on the ground by civil society and people in the field but also diplomatic effort, and diplomatic effort in a creative way that can go outside the bounds because dealing with non-state armed groups is a difficult one and a collaborative effort is needed.

We see also in the mine action program that we have got the government aid agency assisting with the funding of mine clearance in other countries and also in the rehabilitation of mine victims. The danger is that people think that this is enough and it is being done. What we are facing actually is a long-term problem—well, a problem with long-term effects—and we need to have a policy decision that we will follow this issue for as long as is required. It may be that the extent or the quantity may vary, but we would want to see some kind of way, means or structure set up so that this work can continue and not be seen as just something done for political expediency.

Mrs CROSIO—You have answered part of the question to Dr Southcott. I am rather disturbed when you see photos like that—people are still, even today, treading on mines and suffering serious injury from it. Has your campaign—I know you are the Australian network—put any pressure on the countries that actually manufacture the mines to provide the finance so that the clearing of the mines already planted through the fields can be done a lot quicker?

Sister Pak Poy—Yes. The international campaign—and we have a parallel group who participate in that working group on ethics—has that as a question that they are addressing. They need to address the problem of countries that continue to produce—

Mrs CROSIO—That profit from it.

Sister Pak Poy—Yes, and even the companies within those countries, and the question of compensation. That is being looked at, but it is fraught with legal complexities. It is true that it does need to be addressed and we are attempting that.

Mrs CROSIO—You said the government aid agency does the funding. To what level of funding? Is it enough for you to clear 10 acres in a year or so many square kilometres a year? What type of funding are we talking about?

Sister Pak Poy—Do you mean Australian funding?

Mrs CROSIO—In Australian dollars, if you can, just as a guesstimate.

Sister Pak Poy—I am sorry I cannot give you even a guesstimate because the figures vary from one country to another, depending on the density of the mine problem.

Mrs CROSIO—Obviously if it is still occurring on a daily basis it is not quick enough, is it?

Sister Pak Poy—It is not quick enough, that is true. We need more funding for training of more clearers. The UN has what is called the Mine Action Service, which coordinates the funding and most of that comes through the trust fund that was set up for mine clearance.

Mrs CROSIO—Do they provide the training as well or just the funding?

Sister Pak Poy—Only the funding. They do call on other countries to help with training of mine clearers, but most of it is being done at the moment by non-government agencies.

Mrs CROSIO—Have any of the 137 countries that have already signed the treaty come forward on a voluntary basis and said, 'Not only are we a signatory but we want to do more to assist and help in the campaign'?

Sister Pak Poy—Yes. There are countries that have given great funding and they would include the Scandinavian countries, Norway and Sweden.

Mrs CROSIO—Has Australia done that?

Sister Pak Poy—Australia has, as part of the pledge of the $100 million over the 11 years. The United States also gives funding for that kind of clearance but at the same time has not signed and says that it will not until it has alternatives—maybe 2006.

Mrs CROSIO—It worries me also that in answer to one of the questions you stated that mine clearance is now done mainly by military men. In other words, we have not got civilian expertise?

Sister Pak Poy—In Australia the mine clearance is by military, or former military personnel. We have expertise but we do not have a non-government mine clearing operation. Austcare would be one of the few that has attempted to be operational in that field. The skilled personnel from Australia would be working with other agencies, including the UN service.

Mrs CROSIO—I have to congratulate your organisation for the work that has been happening over the years, but one of the concerns I have is that, while working on the stockpiles and getting everyone to sign the treaties, in the meantime people are still being killed, maimed or hurt for life because clearance is not happening at the same pace as everyone would expect.

Sister Pak Poy—That is right. That is one of the reasons why there is a certain frustration with the structures of the UN.

Mrs CROSIO—Is the frustration that they are not willing, that they do not have the people with the ability or that they just do not seem to have a direction? They are some of the things we are trying to get out in relation to the UN's operation.

Sister Pak Poy—It is a personal opinion that I must express here, because I would not have—

Mrs CROSIO—But an opinion with a lot of experience.

Sister Pak Poy—Yes. It seems to me that the UN as it is currently operating, and certainly in the CCW area—which are the meetings that I have most experience with—and the Ottawa Treaty, still uses blocs like the eastern bloc, the western bloc and the non-aligned movement. If you were not aligned, you had to get aligned. They are out-of-date categories, and they are one reason, I believe, that you do not get honest exchange. It makes it more difficult then to put a truly humanitarian problem before the people untainted by discussions of so-called national security, which I think is more political expediency. That would be one form.

I think representation is another, because it was very interesting for us to see how the representation could be changed and was changed during the Ottawa process. For example, when the text of the treaty was being drafted and negotiated in Oslo, you had a different dynamic between the small and larger nations. So those are the kinds of things that I think need to be looked at.

Mrs CROSIO—Do you think the change came about because it was media driven at the time and there was a lot of pressure? You had the Princess take it on and the media certainly were driving it.

Sister Pak Poy—I think the media were important to the campaign but I do not think they were driving it.

Mrs CROSIO—I meant public opinion, not people like yourself but those from the outside asking questions.

Sister Pak Poy—We need the media to help with public education, but the campaign has been most effective I think where there is grassroots action. If you do not have the base among the people, then it is very difficult to bring about the change in policy.

Senator BOURNE—Sister Patricia, you have mentioned some of the problems you found with the UN. Can you tell us of any ways that you think they could be fixed, because we would be looking at recommendations to try to clean up some of that? Also, in the Ottawa process, did

you find the same regional groupings as you find at the UN? Did you find that regional alliances played as large a part, or were countries acting individually?

Sister Pak Poy—I think in the Ottawa process, it was possible to have non-government representation as well, not only on delegations but also in the corridors. I think that has an effect on how countries relate. It was a lot more informal, though I must say that I did not think they took in hand the opportunity to move with greater flexibility. Some of the UN procedures also rolled over into that freer process.

I think the lobbying goes on and the movement into blocs happens; you can see it. The like-minded—although not just the like-minded but also those similar in appearance—tend to congregate together. But what is more important is the possibility of some kind of informal and inclusive interaction, and that needs to be encouraged, I think. It does not just happen. So some structure that would allow for those kinds of informal opportunities and a voice to the smaller nations would be helpful.

Senator BOURNE—And do you think encouraging NGOs to have a more flexible role within the UN would be useful?

Sister Pak Poy—Yes, either through country delegations, or through the consultative process that the UN has itself. I know that that is easier in the countries that perhaps have a more democratic orientation. That does not always figure but, on the whole, that is probably true, that that is easier for those countries. For those that are more totalitarian or dictatorial in their approach, then that is sometimes hard.

Dr SOUTHCOTT—Given that most of the countries that you have listed are members or observers of the ASEAN Regional Forum, and you did mention the ASEAN Regional Forum in your opening statement, do you think that there would be benefit in having this on the agenda of the ASEAN Regional Forum in pursuing second track diplomacy within that forum as well as what is being done in the United Nations? We are looking at the United Nations, but I just wonder whether things can be sped up in a regional sense.

Sister Pak Poy—Yes, I think that would be most useful. We have attempted to do that, but really it is very difficult for non-government organisations to break into a forum that has government representation only. It means that we must persuade governments to allow other kinds of representation, or we have to persuade them that this is an issue that needs to be on the agenda, not only as an incidental but as a major piece. Yes, most useful.

CHAIR—Thank you very much, Sister Pak Poy, for appearing before our inquiry today and for the contribution you have made towards it.

[10.07 a.m.]

PICONE, Ms Catherine Margaret Mary, International Executive Committee Delegate, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

ACTING CHAIR (Mr Hollis)—On behalf of the subcommittee I welcome the representative of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. I should advise you that the proceedings here today are legal proceedings of the parliament and warrant the same respect as proceedings in the respective houses. The subcommittee prefers that all evidence is given in public but, should you at any stage wish to give any evidence in private, you may ask to do so and the subcommittee will give consideration to your request. We have received your submission which has been authorised for publication. Would you like to make any corrections to that submission?

Ms Picone—There is a small correction where we talk about information in regard to Rwanda, that that situation was known. As Kofi Annan has said more recently, it is not information that was the issue.

ACTING CHAIR—Did you want that deleted, or did you want just a change to it?

Ms Picone—Yes, just amended would be—

ACTING CHAIR—At the end of your evidence, you might see the secretariat, John or Margaret. Is that okay with the committee members? I ask you now to make a short opening statement and then the committee might have some questions to ask you.

Ms Picone—For the information of the committee, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom is a very old NGO; it is 85 years old this year. We have had an interest in prevention of war from the very beginning. That is why we were set up. We were founded during World War I when women took a delegation to heads of state of all belligerent countries asking for a talking solution rather than the killing, maiming, raping solution that is called war. We have supported the League of Nations and later the United Nations in every way that we could.

As members of the Australian section of our organisation—one of 46 sections around the world—we have been very proud over the years of our own government's record in the UN. We have played a constructive part there. It seems that implicitly our governments have recognised that the international community is an active construct, something we have to build and contribute towards and which is continually evolving. It is not something we can take for granted.

We have been only too aware in WILPF that the international community has not always existed. We regard it as something to be cherished. So it is with some degree of disquiet that we perceive lately what may be a retreat from the fullest, most active engagement with the UN; it is a loss of momentum at any rate. I will give you three examples of the sort of thing we mean. There has been no statement of policy but it is just something we detect in the overall approach.

Firstly, in the National Consultative Committee for Peace and Disarmament, approaches were made to the Minister for Foreign Affairs concerning marking this year as the United Nations International Year for a Culture of Peace. As you know, no government backing has been forthcoming for the marking of this important year. Mr Downer apparently said that it was not being done because the prevention of war and the building of peace were the ongoing work of his departmen—or words to that effect. We consider that, if that is the case, this was an opportunity that was lost. We note by contrast, for instance, that the International Year for Older Persons last year did receive budget money.

Secondly, the recently concluded social development summit in Geneva did not have ministerial representation, although 110 countries did have representation at the ministerial level and 30 even had their heads of state there. We are just asking ourselves questions as this stage.

Thirdly, we were dismayed with the government's response to the United Nations CERD recommendations with that whole of government review. We are just asking ourselves: what does this mean and what message does this give to other nations about Australia's approach to the UN? It is an active construct and something we need to be continually building and working toward.

Finally, I would like to say that the United Nations clearly carries the hopes and aspirations of billions of people. There are many occasions where Kofi Annan has reported of being quite touched by the expression of that from people all around the world. It is precisely for that reason—that it carries the hope of billions—that it is very easy to make the United Nations the scapegoat for people's disappointment when the efforts of the international community fail, as they did so spectacularly, for instance, in Rwanda.

As we said in our submission, it is really important that we recognise that the United Nations is nothing more than the combination of the constituent nation states. So it is an apportioning of blame that just does not make sense. We think that any apportioning of blame to the United Nations is something that should be repudiated as a general direction.

ACTING CHAIR—Thank you very much. Before I pass you to Senator Payne to start with a question, in your submission on my page 16, on the first page where you summed up, you are talking about failures and blame, and you say that it is an:

> ... entity which has no existence apart from that of the states acting together. Such "blaming" of the UN, especially when levelled for reasons of short-term political expediency, needs to be recognised and widely repudiated.

We have been on this hearing for a week now and have gone from Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne, to today in Adelaide. So often people come before us and blame the UN as though it is some entity itself instead of, as you have so rightly said, it being the collection of whatever 'it' that entity wants to be, what those independent sovereign states demand of it. I was particularly struck with that, but that is enough of my pontificating.

Ms Picone—Can I just make a comment on that?

ACTING CHAIR—Sure.

Ms Picone—First of all, I would like to appreciate your coming here to Adelaide. You must have got up early to catch your flights, so I do appreciate your commitment to this process. Secondly, I would say that, unfortunately, that habit of apportioning blame to the UN is widespread and, of course, given that we live in a democracy—and the United States government has done it more than once—it is so easy to take a swipe at the UN and gain some apparent electoral short-term advantage. You folks are saddled with the terrible difficulty of having to get yourselves re-elected every time. So that is an implicit difficulty, I think—a quite marked one. Finally, I would say that there are many frightened people, many fearful people in our society. I have heard people, for instance, speak of the one-world government of the UN and they really are very scared. So it is easy to stir up that pool of fear and to use that for short-term politically expedient ends. As I say, it is to be regretted. I have not got the solution to that one.

Mrs CROSIO—We heard them all in Brisbane.

Ms Picone—Tell me, please.

Senator PAYNE—I am interested in your suggestion in relation to reconstruction, particularly on page 5 of your submission, in that your organisations thinks that reconstruction missions and authorities should comprise a designated proportion of women members. Are there any particular instances in recent times that you can point to which you think this may have been an advantage in, and how do you actually implement a quota arrangement or a designated proportion, as you describe it, like that in reality given the level of skill and training and so on that we are looking at?

Ms Picone—Could I just say, by the way, just as a suggestion, I think it would be really useful to give the speakers a copy of the little booklet we have got so we are referring to the same pagination. I have made a copy of our submission, but I am not sure. When you are saying page 1 and page 5, I am not always matching up. That is just a suggestion for the future for the secretariat.

Senator PAYNE—It is the paragraph immediately above 'International criminal court'.

Ms Picone—It is fine; I know where it is. First of all, you ask whether there are any specific instances where it would have been useful. I would say I cannot think of a single one going through my mind. I have just been reading William Shawcross's book, you know the one, *Deliver Us From Evil.*

Senator PAYNE—Yes.

Ms Picone—It is excellent. In every single case he speaks of there—Rwanda, Angola, Sierra Leone, Kosovo, East Timor, I am sure I have missed some—

Senator PAYNE—That is okay, we get your drift.

Ms Picone—In every single case, I cannot think of an exception where it would not have been advantageous to have that prescribed number of women in the reconstruction teams. I think that that will go a long way towards solve a lot of the implicit difficulties that exist at the moment. For instance, we also mention in our submission that women in Cambodia reported

difficulties with the UN personnel themselves in that the local women are very poor. It is the same with the increased traffic in women—it comes out of poverty. They were working in brothels and serving as prostitutes to the UN personnel themselves.

Having a large number of women—51 per cent I would go for—in those teams would go a long way to resolving those difficulties that arise out of having that imbalance. People get lonely and desperate. I would say there is not a single instance where I would make an exception to that. How do we go about it? It has been difficult, even with the greatest benevolence. For instance, I see Kofi Annan as a real ally to women's fuller participation. He advocated recently that the world's media be put in the hands of women on International Women's Day. Also, Karim Chowdhury, when he was President of the Security Council for the month of March, made an excellent statement on women in armed conflict. There is a broader realisation beginning to emerge on the importance of involving women in the mediation and reconstruction processes.

Even with the greatest benevolence and goodwill it has not been easy, for instance, to change the culture of the UN where men are mostly in the highest ranking positions. We know those are difficult things to resolve. I do not have an easy answer, except I would say that we need to keep that as our goal, not to move away from it and not say, 'No, for various cultural reasons, 50 per cent is undoable in some way.' I would say, yes, we need to move to that. Although I do not have the particular answers, I say that the answers always lie in a collective effort of people's collective imagination and intelligence. We are quite capable of coming up with a solution to that.

Senator PAYNE—You talked about changing cultures and you were referring to the UN at the time. Let us look at the reconstruction process that is currently occurring in East Timor, which obviously requires significant development of laws, practices, procedures and policies and in that whole process some observers would say women are not sufficiently involved. If you wish to engage the local community—and my personal view is that that is fundamental to success—then you have to take up local participants as well. You are actually trying to negotiate through two sets of complex cultures—the UN culture and, in this case, the East Timorese culture. Do you think that makes it harder?

Ms Picone—Firstly, there has been an increase recently in the number of local personnel employed in UN teams. I think that general principle has been taken on board. William Shawcross talks about the great disparity in what was paid, for instance, to local personnel and to personnel coming from Geneva, New York, Europe and so on. I think that that disparity in wealth is often at the heart of the problem. By the way, I noticed on the program that the Campaign for an Independent East Timor is speaking next. They can give you more particular answers. They have a more precise picture of what is happening on the ground at the moment in East Timor. Perhaps the question would be usefully directed to them also.

There is a lot of disruption at the moment among local East Timorese people about the lack of involvement of local populous in the UN missions. It is very easy for the UN to take on a complexion of looking like rich versus poor, or even a rich north versus a poor south. If local personnel could be employed in greater numbers, it would go a long way to mitigating that divide, but I do perceive that divide between the rich and the poor being at the heart of a lot of the difficulties.

Senator PAYNE—My question was also directed to when there are cultural resistances to the involvement of women in a democratic process. I instanced in one of these hearings the other day the democratic nature of Kuwait which legislates for gender equality but does not given women the vote. They are going to think I am victimising them now, but I am not; it is just a current issue. There are some cultural challenges in that process as well which have to be negotiated. I wondered if you thought that those individual cultural practices in some of the countries that you mentioned, for example, made it even harder as well—not just the UN?

Ms Picone—I have got the point of the question now. As you know, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women has the most reservations of any convention. That is an indication of the problem that you have identified and the problem that we need to find a solution to. What I would say is that all cultures have good and bad aspects. I grew up as a Catholic and I can tell you that there are lots of good aspects of growing up in a Catholic culture, but there are some that are not so good.

Senator PAYNE—I grew up as a Methodist; I am not sure where that leaves me.

Ms Picone—You know exactly what I am talking about. In Irish culture, Tutsi culture, Polish culture—whatever culture you would like to name—there are good and bad aspects. I would say, as a bit of shorthand—and I am do not know how this will go with the men—that sexism is always a bad aspect of any culture. That is not to blame the men; I do not think men are to blame for sexism. But any cultural practice that does not recognise that women are full human beings with a full contribution to make is not a cultural practice that ought to be defended. I would say that, where the UN encounters those sorts of cultural difficulties among the local population, that should not be regarded as set in stone but as something to be negotiated around.

Senator PAYNE—Thank you for your help.

Ms Picone—Thank you. I appreciated your questions.

Senator BOURNE—You mentioned reforms to the Security Council. I fully agree with you. Can you tell us how you think that could best be reformed? What do you think would be the best way to do that?

Ms Picone—In our view there are great difficulties with reform of the Security Council. In Sister Patricia's submission and evidence here, those difficulties emerged also. Because of the permanency of the five and the need for amendments to the charter to pass them, it is almost impossible to get those changes that we can all see—and I think that even the P5 in their finer moments no doubt see the same difficulty. What I would say is that expansion of the numbers would be important from our point of view. We like the rotating chair, but what is going to happen is that, unless we can get those reforms—and I do not see a lot of hope for that—we are going to see more of what has happened with the International Campaign to Ban Landmines. People are going to be looking for forums outside where there is more fluidity, less rigidity. The problem there is the very oppositional antagonisms that still linger from the time of what we all fondly call the Cold War.

Senator BOURNE—You mentioned business NGOs—that there is probably too much emphasis, or it is becoming that way. Can you tell us bit more about your views on that?

Ms Picone—I cannot recall now whether we quoted this figure in our submission—these were figures from about four years ago. The world's biggest 200 multinationals now have 28.3 per cent of global gross domestic product, and they employ less than 1/100th of the world's work force. According to the UN's own human development report in 1996, the world's richest 358 billionaires had greater wealth than 45 per cent of the combined annual income of the world's people. The 1999 report indicated that that trend towards increasing disparity is a trend that is itself increasing. I am sorry; I have lost my train of thought.

Senator BOURNE—BINGOs.

Ms Picone—BINGOs, yes. It is inevitable, in a world where multinational corporations are bigger economic entities than, for instance, the whole of Austria's economy, that they are going to seek to have influence in international forums—and they have—so that the interests of multinationals get heard. Often I think those multinational corporations see NGOs such as ours, the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, the UNAA, the Red Cross and so on as in some way having an undue voice in the UN. When they are talking about a level playing field, they do not see how unlevel the playing field of their own construction is. So, increasingly, we see a trend of multinational corporations trying to redress what they see as the influence of these NGOs who are—

Senator BOURNE—Upstarts.

Ms Picone—With their huge resources it is very hard for us with our limited resources to gain any balance. I would really like to see some definition of NGOs brought forward that ensures that that inequity in distribution of world's wealth is not amplified by the activity of BINGOs in and around the UN.

Senator BOURNE—Thank you.

Mrs CROSIO—Can I first congratulate your league for putting in the submission which they did. You have put a lot of effort and work into it. I really was taken with your summary of recommendation 15:

That the trade union movement should be recognised by all Australian governments including conservative governments as a legitimate part of the NGO community with an important role in civil society.

I just had to put that on the record. Can I come back in serious questioning and ask: with the amount of knowledge that has been gathered and put into a submission like this, how does your league actually go about educating other people around Australia? One of the problems we have found in taking evidence, particularly in this past week, is that so many people out there do not understand, appreciate or even know what the United Nations is all about. Do you have an education process in place which other organisations could follow or adopt?

Ms Picone—Thank you for the question. I, too, think it would make a huge difference if all governments could work with the expression of workers' interests, not to have that. I think that oppositional frame of mind is a great difficulty and, in fact, what results in wars. Yes, we have been at the process of community education for 85 years and have tried any means we can think

of to do that. To answer your question I could give you a full description of our league's activities, but I will just give a few little bits and pieces.

Mrs CROSIO—Is your league active in every state in Australia?

Ms Picone—Yes, except in the Northern Territory where we do have members but, as yet, not a branch. Our league is active in at least 46 countries around the world. When I say 'at least', I mean that is growing very rapidly in South America. The women there are seeing the internationality and the consultative status of our organisation as a way to get their interests into international forums quickly.

I would say two things: one is that the main part of our work is really done in coalition with other NGOs, both at the international level and at the national level. For instance, our organisation was given the job of being the facilitating agency for the World March of Women in the Year 2000 campaign in Australia. That campaign grew out of another NGO—unrelated to WILPF—in Canada and their work, in turn, grew out of the United Nations' Beijing Platform for Action. I am trying to paint a picture here of the interconnectiveness of all the campaigns. WILPF, my organisation, is involved in a campaign this year—it will culminate on 17 October, International Day for the Eradication of Poverty—with some 20 other women's NGOs, including the YWCA, Women's Electoral Lobby, UNAA, women's committee and many others.

Mrs CROSIO—Do any league members get invited to speak to high school students or to give that knowledge, so that it is an ongoing process?

Ms Picone—As I said, we are doing everything we can think of doing. For instance, about four years ago here in South Australia we ran a yearlong project which we called Through Aboriginal Eyes. We invited children in schools to paint pictures of or to write poems on how they would see Australia if they themselves had been born Aboriginal. That was a very big project. We sent materials out to schools and we went into schools and spoke. We had a big launch of it at Tandanya and an exhibition that ran for about a month. That was just one project.

As part of the World March of Women in the year 2000, the Australian Education Union—which, through the ACTU, is one of the 20 women's organisations represented that I mentioned—is also putting a kit on the Net on the aims of the World March of Women. The aims are, by the way, the elimination of poverty, greater equity in the sharing of wealth between women and men, and the elimination of violence against women.

The other thing I want to say is that, a few years ago, we were fortunate to have funding through the national women's organisation. I cannot remember the exact name of the program now, but it was the national women's organisation operational grants program. We had funding for about five years. Please do not take the five years as being accurate; that is just an impression. During that time, our work was hugely facilitated. So much of our effort presently goes into fundraising. We had to work very hard, for instance, to raise I think $2,879 to have 80,000 cards printed for the World March of Women. The cards are going to be presented to Kofi Annan on 17 October. A lot of our work and my time goes into that sort of activity. When our organisation's work is diverted in that way, into fundraising and just scraping to have an existence, we cannot do the work that we really want to do, which is the community education work.

What I would say is that government funding of NGOs who are advocating for the UN is really important in educating the wider community. As I said, that pool of fear is out there and is whipped up by certain elements. I am not for a minute saying that they are malicious; I think they are fearful too. But we do have to think of ways to counter that, otherwise that is going to grow. We argue, somewhere in our submission, for funding for NGOs such as ours. It is with regret that we note that the UNAA—United Nations Association of Australia—has lost funding. That just puzzles us really. We think it is important that governments fund NGOs that are working to educate the community about the UN.

Mrs CROSIO—In the submission before us, you have also said:

> Although the principle of deference to nations as sovereign entities has served the international community well enough for the past 50 years or more, we are inclined to take the view that in the post-Cold War period, the doctrine of sovereignty of nation states needs to be reviewed.

It is here also if you wish to have it. It comes under the concept of national sovereignty. How do you believe the doctrine of sovereignty might evolve in the future?

Ms Picone—As I also said in the submission, we appreciate the Secretary-General's lead in this direction. In this next century, because a lot of the definition of borders arose out of the colonial past, when whole peoples who were grouped together often had no cultural commonality, it is clear that we are now going to be in a period when those entities are going to break up. We have to prepare ourselves for that. I believe that this debate that Kofi Annan has called for is a way of doing that. We cannot go on assuming any longer that the nations, as they were defined at a certain point in history, can remain fixed forever after and that the UN machinery can be set in motion where peoples have legitimate aspirations for self-determination.

It depends on the goodwill of the constituent nation states. It really ties back to the question that I explored a little with Mr Hollis at the beginning of my speaking here this morning. It depends on the goodwill of governments to ensure that this debate is now engendered in the community in a way that is genuine so that people are encouraged to think about this concept, not to have it whipped up and stirred up in some reactive, fear filled way.

Mrs CROSIO—I think everyone would agree with you, but it is very hard to implement. Yet, we cannot give up.

Ms Picone—Yes, it is hard to implement. Call me naïve, but I believe that all people—whatever political party they are in—are good and that you can appeal to the rationality in everybody. If people can see that something needs to be moved forward for our common security, they can be engaged. It is hard—I am not saying it is simple—but it needs to be done.

Mrs CROSIO—Throughout your submission, you talk about reform. Under the heading of 'Reform of the UN', you state that reform of the UN is a matter of urgency and that perhaps it needs more money, but nowhere do you cover what has been covered in other evidence given to us—for instance, the amount of duplication that occurs in the UN. Is money the solution to it, or is it a restructure of past practices to give them a different direction into the future. By 'they' I mean not only member states but also the bureaucracy behind the UN. What is your opinion of that?

Ms Picone—First of all, I am not for a moment saying that the UN's internal operations cannot be improved. I think they can be and I think there have been efforts to do that. There is a bureaucracy in Paris that is obviously in need of some change. I would like to quote Kofi Annan, who says: 'When the international community makes a solemn promise to safeguards and to protect innocent civilians from massacre then it must be willing to back its promise with the necessary means otherwise it is surely better not to raise the hopes in the first place.' He later goes on to say: 'If we are given the means in Kosovo, Sierra Leone, East Timor and in Angola we have a real opportunity to break the cycles of violence once and for all.'

While I am not denying for a minute that improvements and cost-cutting measures can be implemented within the United Nations itself, I would say that overall it suffers from a lack of funds—which is a great pity and at the heart of the difficulty. For instance, in Rwanda, General Romeo Dallaire asked for a sufficient mandate and an increased number of troops on the ground. However, back in the Security Council, the Secretary-General called for two battalions of 5,000 troops, and out of that came a compromise resolution from the UN of 500 troops for Rwanda at a time when it was completely inadequate. What I am getting at is that inadequate funding is at the heart of the failure of the international machinery to redress these difficulties.

Mrs CROSIO—Another concern in your submission is that those who are on the international stage seem to be those who are wielding the power in the UN, and that that also needs to be changed. Again, that is very hard. Regardless of what the United States or Japan is doing, how does one actually change their input in the United Nations, as they are very large states? The smaller countries are saying that they want to retain the one vote, otherwise, with their smaller populations, they would be outvoted by the larger countries. The developed countries seem to be wielding a harder stick than the Third World countries participating in the United Nations. Could you can expand on that a little, or was it just a statement that you felt should go in the submission?

Ms Picone—I am happy to expand on that. It is a subject very dear to my heart. In the GA, they do have one vote. But the Security Council is the place where the power structure becomes inequitable. That reflects the relative wealth of the various countries. What I am about to say is unpopular, but what we have to do is change the economic system. That is clear. That is easy to say.

In this present arrangement, although it might appear to be in the interests of the United States, Germany, Japan, Canada or Australia to maintain this present inequitable economic structure, the cost of it is permanent conflict. If we are going to have a situation where we allow people rapaciously to make huge amounts of money out of the sale of arms, then those arms are going to end up being used. Small arms are the main killer of people. Clearly, it seems to me that what we need to do is put our heads together and come up with a system—and I am quoting straight from the aims of our organisation—that is based on meeting the needs of people and not on profit and privilege.

All sorts of groups and organisations in society have been trying to do that for a long time, but we need to say, 'Look, we really have come to the precipice, given what is happening with our environment—the way that trees are being felled, the increased salination, the depletion of the ozone layer—and now 86 per cent of casualties in wars are non-combatants.' We cannot go on like this. There are six million of us here. Let us put our heads together and come up with an

economic system that serves us well. When we do that, all those difficulties of the power imbalances will fall away.

Mrs CROSIO—Thank you. Can I say for the record, again, I will never ever hear the word 'bingo' again without thinking of Business Interest NGOs.

Dr SOUTHCOTT—I want to ask you about peacekeeping and peace enforcement. Since the end of the Cold War we have seen a great expansion in peacekeeping, and I think the United Nations has been fairly successful in peacekeeping. Where it has really failed has been in areas where peacekeeping was not appropriate, like Rwanda, Somalia and Bosnia. I notice that you have a proposal for a standing army, and that is a proposal that has been around the United Nations for a time. Do you think it is more likely that we are going to see, in situations like East Timor or the Persian Gulf, for example, international coalitions of the willing acting under United Nations Security Council and General Assembly resolutions which can later become United Nations operations rather than a United Nations force operating? It seems to me that there is a big problem, as you said, in Rwanda with time lag and with the will, at a UN level, to respond to things which do require peace enforcement.

Ms Picone—The short answer to your question about whether I think that is what we are going to see is: unfortunately, yes. In my opinion—and I should say that this is not a unanimous opinion through our whole organisation—what happened in Rwanda, for instance, could have been prevented. If the Secretary-General is left in every situation to be scrambling around trying to pull together, piece together, an adequate force to go in—that is what happened in Rwanda. I think he said he made 450 telephone calls begging people to send sufficient troops there—and that is under coalitions of the willing—and he could not get them to go. General Dallaire was asking for an upgrading of the mandate to chapter 7 on peace enforcement and could not get that. To my mind, if there had been a standing army that the Secretary-General could have called on at the time in a very rapid response manner, the whole thing might have been averted in its early stages, before the propaganda of hatred was broadcast widely through the countryside in Rwanda. What I would say is that, if the Secretary-General did not have to scramble around begging constituent nations to contribute forces, we might be in a better position to respond rapidly. Some situations, unfortunately, do require that sort of rapid response.

I should say that in our submission we said that along with this we think that besides troops and the way we normally think of them armed with guns and kit going in dealing with the already pervasive violence existing in a situation, there should be a standing army of peacebuilders, what you might call 'social workers'. We think that would go a long way, too, to improving things.

I would like to finish up on this if I could. Nobody asked me about our idea of having truth and reconciliation commissions before all this happens so that the peoples who are living alongside each other get a chance to express their aspirations. I have never believed that religious or ethnic differences are the reason for war. Those age-old differences though are used by those who have an interest in stirring up conflict to get that going, and we see that happening everywhere.

Just in conclusion, I would say that, no, it is almost the opposite of what you are saying. I would say that it is a way of getting around that difficulty of the UN not being adequately funded. The Secretary-General should be able to call on that sort of force at a moment's notice and not be begging the United States or France, as it was in Rwanda, to send people there.

Dr SOUTHCOTT—As I remember, the notion of a standing army was around during the League of Nations and they never had one. But in terms of collective security under the League of Nations—

Ms Picone—That is right. It has been around for a long time. I am certainly not saying it is a new idea and I want to stress that is not an idea that is universally acceptable within our own organisation. Again, I think it is something that could be usefully debated.

ACTING CHAIR—Are there any last issues you wish to leave with us?

Ms Picone—No, I cannot recall anything. Thank you for your questions.

ACTING CHAIR—Thank you very much for appearing before us today and for your evidence.

Ms Picone—Thank you for your work, too.

Proceedings suspended from 10.52 a.m. to 11.02 a.m.

FISHER, Mr William Alford, Committee Member, Campaign for an Independent East Timor (SA) Inc.

HANNEY, Mr Robert Anthony, Secretary, Campaign for an Independent East Timor (SA) Inc.

ACTING CHAIR—Welcome. I must advise you that the proceedings here today are legal proceedings of the parliament and warrant the same respect which proceedings in the respective houses of parliament demand. The subcommittee prefers that all evidence is given in public but, should you at any stage wish to give any evidence in private, you may ask to do so and the subcommittee will give consideration to your request. We have received your submission and it has been authorised for publication. Do you have any alterations or additional submissions to the submission you put into us?

Mr Hanney—I certainly have some extra things to put in.

ACTING CHAIR—We just have to get this authorised—this is a formality. I will then invite you to make an opening statement. Are you happy to have the submission, as you it put in, stand? Do you want to make any alterations to that now?

Mr Hanney—I think just a very minor one, perhaps. On page 1, in the third paragraph of the introduction where it says 'While the United Nations is only as effective as its member states will allow it', after 'member states', I should have added, 'and the major powers'. It may be fairly obvious. Apart from that, I think it is generally okay.

ACTING CHAIR—I invite you to make a short opening statement before the committee proceeds to questions.

Mr Hanney—I might start off by putting up some of the recommendations that we think are necessary to reform the United Nations and then, perhaps, add some detail as to why. I draw much of these from the Australian Peace Committee's submission. They have put up a number of proposals and I will not go through them all. But there are some which pertain to us and which we would agree with, and we might do well to alert the committee to these.

I do not know whether people have the Australian Peace Committee's submission in front of them but, on page 2, they state that:

> We believe that the only permanent positions on the Security Council should be one from each of the six main regions of the world (Europe, North America, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia Pacific, West Asia and Africa) with Australia and New Zealand being part of the Asia Pacific group. We believe that these six representatives should be elected from the regions on a rotational basis with a time-span to be decided by the members of the General Assembly.

The submission then states::

> We believe that the overall number of Security Council members should be at least 18.

Thirdly:

We believe that there should be no power of veto in the Security Council.

The last one is very important to us. Another quote that I will take from the Australian Peace Committee's submission in calling upon the Australian government to lobby for these changes is this:

. intensify lobbying for the UN to exert more influence on the IMF and World Bank for a more humane and structured approach to Third World debt;

Because I am representing the Campaign for an Independent East Timor, all of my stuff here will apply to East Timor and what lessons we can draw from that, so I will try and make it quickly.

There probably is not much point in going back into dark and deep history, but most people would possibly agree that we have had 25 years of Western complicity in the occupation. First of all, there was the invasion and occupation of East Timor. The United Nations intervention was in fact a very minimalist diplomatic venture until very recent times, of course, when an Australian-led peacekeeping force was sent in. This was sent in after the damage was done, and we would be critical of the way in which the Australian government dealt with requests, in particular from the United States, to send in an earlier peacekeeping force before the ballot took place rather than after, especially as they had information that there was going to be a bloodbath of sorts, which there was, and great devastation.

We also call on the Australian government, in relation to Australia's role over the last 25 years, to release to the public all intelligence information regarding East Timorese atrocities—for prosecution purposes. At the moment the Indonesian government has volunteered to take that up, although we believe that the United Nations ought to very carefully monitor that, and it must be seen to be credible and effective. We also note that on 15 June in the *Age* there was a letter signed by a number of prominent Australian people calling for the release of this information from the Australian government for the benefit of the international community in prosecuting war criminals over East Timor. It said, 'The continued domination of Indonesia by the military represents a threat to the wellbeing of all the archipelago and beyond.' Some of the people who signed this were Judith Wright, now not with us, Peter Garrett, Faith Bandler, Jane Campion and a number of other people from many fields of life.

One thing we wish to emphasise is that we note the guidelines for the inquiry appear to be looking at intervening within nation states. East Timor was never legally a part of Indonesia, although it was treated that way by certainly Australian governments over the years and in a de facto way by the United Nations. They always had to ask Indonesia if they could send someone there to check out human rights abuses or whatever, and right to the end they had to ask them if they could send in a peacekeeping force, until, of course, it was too late. We just want to emphasise that there was never a problem with East Timor being an internal dispute of Indonesia. It always was a non-self governing territory, and previously, of course, a Portuguese colony. We also would add that it is a great tragedy that West Papua in 1969 was allowed to be basically handed over to the Indonesian government after a very farcical so-called act of free choice.

On the matter of internal disputes, in the arc above Australia from the eastern Indonesian islands down to Fiji and beyond at the moment we are seeing a fair amount of internal dispute.

We would hold that there is no call for any military action, and I think the present government is probably acting appropriately in using its diplomacy in resolving these issues. I must add though that as far as Australia is concerned, with Ambon and the Malukus generally, there has been much evidence—and it has been backed up by the foreign minister of Indonesia who admits straight out—that the Suharto clique is funding the jihad militias who are causing rampage in that region. I should also add that the militias are also now active in West Papua and they are still in West Timor preventing 80,000 to 100,000 abductees from returning to East Timor.

It is therefore incumbent on the Australian government not to resume military cooperation with the Indonesian military. The Indonesian military is not the government of Indonesia; however it would probably like to be, given half a chance, and it used to be. If anything, Australia ought to be supporting democratic processes in Indonesia and steering clear of the military, full stop, and I believe both major parties have indicated that they may take that up as a policy. Our committee is very concerned with that suggestion. I think we have learnt a lesson over 25 years: there is nothing to be gained for us or for the region.

In relation to the way the United Nations is operating at present—that is, the UNTAET people in East Timor—there has been much criticism widely broadcast and telecast vis-à-vis the East Timorese with respect to self-governing and the CNRT, which is basically the government-in-waiting led by Xanana Gusmao, Ramos Horta and other well known people. It is a very wide political grouping, an umbrella organisation comprising the total political spectrum of East Timor. It is also very conciliatory in that it has even included members of the militias on this council of the United Nations.

We would call for an independent ombudsman, or ombudsperson, for accountability. That certainly has been suggested after the Rwanda experience but, also, in light of what is happening in East Timor where much criticism has come from Timorese. One Timorese said, 'We are being recolonised by the World Bank'. Agio Pereira, the Executive Officer of the East Timor Relief Association and coordinator of the National Emergency Commission based in Dili, said, 'The foreign experts are trying to establish the ground on which to build a solid foundation for a prosperous economy where the market forces dictate the rules. The IMF, World Bank and Asia Development Bank have entered the stage with their models, controlling the leash and pushing UNTAET into submission. Capacity building has become part of the fashionable jargon.'

Unfortunately, the Timorese have not been consulted adequately. I believe that recently the United Nations have increased the number of members on the council—the United Nations have jumped. There has been criticism from within the United Nations as well, I might add. One bureaucrat in particular resigned recently and was very scathing of the administration side of the United Nations.

I suppose we are looking at two things: at the general restructuring of the United Nations to make the world body more answerable and democratic—to do with its members; and, secondly, the administration itself which tends to be very top-heavy and bureaucratic. We have all seen pictures of the *Hotel Olympia* sitting outside Dili just opposite a big rubbish pile with the Timorese scrounging for food and the aid workers and the United Nations staff having parties on board this huge monstrosity parked in the bay. So there needs to be some micro reforms

administratively. There needs to be some macro reforms as far as the members of the United Nations are concerned.

ACTING CHAIR—Thank you very much, Mr Hanney. You have highlighted a problem that this committee is grappling with, and I think this is our fifth hearing that we have been grappling with it. That whole question about intervention and, rightly or wrongly, the United Nations as such being based on sovereignty has been put to us before. People have put to us that argument about whether Timor was sovereign or a part of Indonesian sovereignty or Portuguese sovereignty. You can always get a transcript of our evidence. There have been lots of questions this past week about sovereignty: just what is state sovereignty? How do you define it? Should the UN have the power to intervene? It does not at the moment. And what do you do with sovereignty when, indeed—as the previous speaker said—some multinational organisations have more economic power than many so-called sovereign states? So it is a real question. Many members of parliament have been involved in the whole Timor thing, but, rightly or wrongly, my own personal view is that the government had no option—tragic as it was—but to wait for an invitation because otherwise it would have been an invasion or a declaration of war on Indonesia. That is just my own view. Anyway that is enough from me—I am not here to put forward my own point of view.

Dr SOUTHCOTT—Thank you, Mr Hanney, for putting in a submission to the committee. In your letter I think you are perhaps a bit unfair on the United Nations. I would like to ask you a couple of questions. Do you think the tripartite talks between Portugal, Indonesia and United Nations had any influence or bearing on the decision to hold a ballot for self-determination last year?

Mr Hanney—I think certainly, to be fair to the UN, they contributed to some extent. They did go on for some time—I think for about 10 years. I am not exactly sure when they started, but they went on for a fair time. They were certainly helpful, but in that time of course many other people died. I think stronger pressure could have been put on in that time. I do not know whether the talks themselves were a major part of it. I think, basically, it was the collapse of the Suharto government and the statement that Habibie made—which he may have regretted afterwards—that East Timor ought to be independent that really brought on that ballot. Of course everyone jumped up and said, 'All right—you have said it.' I do not know what effect those tripartite talks had. I would say they played a minimal role, but nonetheless they kept the issue on the agenda. I think the Suharto government's demise that was brought on by domestic issues—economic and social—really brought the thing to a head.

Dr SOUTHCOTT—So you think the change of government and the change in president from Suharto to Habibie played a more important role?

Mr Hanney—There is no doubt about that, in my mind.

Dr SOUTHCOTT—Do you think the Prime Minister's December 1998 letter to Habibie suggesting a ballot for greater autonomy for East Timor played any role?

Mr Hanney—Yes. I imagine that it certainly would have played a role. It may not have been the only pressure put on; I assume the United States put pressure on, behind the scenes. I do not know. But, certainly, the letter would have helped; there is no doubt about that.

Dr SOUTHCOTT—Just exploring some of the issues you have raised, do you think the United Nations should have sent peacekeepers to East Timor without the agreement of Indonesia?

Mr Hanney—I think we should have. As I said before, East Timor was never officially a part of Indonesia. It was not recognised as such by the United Nations, yet it was treated as if it were in a kind of de facto way by the UN itself. There were seven resolutions in the first seven years that gradually got diluted from 1975 to 1982, which basically called for Indonesia to withdraw and for East Timor to be given self-determination. East Timor was always seen as a non-self-governing territory, with Portugal still there to play a role in the decolonisation process. It is not Ambon, it is not Aceh or something else. It actually was seen and recognised as a non-self-governing territory.

Obviously, the balance of power factors come into it and a bit of realism. I think in the Cold War period there was no chance of the UN doing much, because basically Indonesia had to be appeased because they were on our side. It is history now, it has gone and it has only been in the last 10 years or so that the United States have changed their position. In fact, they changed their position to a more critical position than Australia. Australia tended to be lagging behind the United States, and it was the United States that actually suggested to John Howard and Alexander Downer last year in March or April—I am not exactly sure now—that the situation there was getting pretty bad and that they would, with approval and support, send in a peacekeeping force.

Mr Fisher—It was February. Stanley Roth, the US Secretary of State, suggested at the time that peacekeepers should be sent to East Timor. Dr Ashton Calvert, the head of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, went to Washington to meet Stanley Roth, and he argued very strongly against sending in peacekeepers at the time. This was February 1999.

Dr SOUTHCOTT—I understand the international law consequences but, practically, if you are saying, 'Send in UN peacekeepers without Indonesia's agreement,' it appears to me that would have been problematic to say the least.

Mr Hanney—Of course, in the end it was sent in without their agreement, wasn't it?

Dr SOUTHCOTT—No, that is not true.

Mr Hanney—They were pressured into agreeing.

Dr SOUTHCOTT—Indonesia did agree.

Mr Hanney—Yes.

Dr SOUTHCOTT—In fact, General Cosgrove has just recently said that there was a lot of cooperation in the early days of INTERFET between INTERFET and the Indonesian military. What will your campaign be doing now?

Mr Hanney—We have been boxing up goods to send to Timor to help them get on their feet. We have decided to keep our name for the time being until the country does achieve its actual

real independence, which I believe is now mooted to be around September next year. We certainly intend to keep supporting the people there.

There is still a security problem on the West Timor border, as you would be aware, and that is something that the Australian government could be pressuring Indonesia on as well. I know Wahid is under pressure from his military and from more conservative members or military members on the MPR. But, once again, following on from what Bill said, I think one of the reasons why we did not act beforehand was our very close military links. We were meeting at high level with the Indonesian military right up to the start, and it was only after basically we sent the forces in that we actually put a stop to our links, but it was going right up to then. There were a lot of people in the military who were quietly dissenting against our position, and that had come out in certain documents.

I still maintain that Australia missed an opportunity with the United States. The United States should not run the world, but they were suggesting that they could send in a peacekeeping force with or without the approval of the Indonesian government, which was basically sitting on its hands. There were leaks coming out that there was going to be a massacre, a revenge, and people in the Australian bureaucracy had been told to shut up. There is the case of Lansell Taudevin, who has now written a book *East Timor: Too Little Too Late* about his experiences. I really think that they could have done something, but that is history now and we need to look to the future. I think it is incumbent upon the United Nations and its member states to take up issues like East Timor, which, as I say, has always been seen as an invaded and occupied country. There was never any doubt about that and yet, for some reason, it was kept off the world scale for some 15 years.

Senator BOURNE—Mr Hanney, you mentioned that someone had said that they believed East Timor was currently, de facto, being colonised by the World Bank.

Mr Hanney—Yes.

Senator BOURNE—I must say I have seen a couple of things that would indicate that to me, too. We had evidence yesterday that one of the other witnesses thought that the influence of Portugal was a bit excessive, particularly in the use of the Mozambique police force as a model for the East Timorese one and other things. The problem is that you have to look somewhere to get help to find models for things. When a nation is building itself up from nothing, where do you think the UN could be useful in giving help whilst trying to avoid any perceived undue influence?

Mr Hanney—It is a very difficult one to answer, because they are caught between a rock and a hard place. As I suggested before, and as some high ranking Timorese have indicated, the World Bank is pushing the agenda a bit. The World Bank does not belong to the UN but obviously they are closely linked. They really push the line. They have already structurally adjusted the place before it has had a chance. They now have a cap of 9,000 civil servants, going up to 12,000 in the next few years. These civil servants are not just public servants—people who work in offices. Half of those are teachers, health workers and policemen, among others. That is a very small number. The Indonesians withdrew 23,000, and East Timor was seen as one of the undeveloped parts of Indonesia. So they had more than double the number and yet the World Bank has seen fit to impose this cap, which, once again, is one of the problems.

It is an economic thing as well and, quite frankly, I think the only way the East Timorese are going to get around it is to adopt a dual policy. On the one hand, they have to subscribe to the global economic situation and the forces that be and, on the other hand, they are going to have to have lots of volunteer doctors. It is a horrible thing to have to do, but it has been done in some places. As far as a model is concerned, yes, I do not know whether there is any precise model that would apply but various things could be taken from various countries. Certainly, the Truth and Reconciliation Council, where they are looking at bringing justice and reconciling the warring factors, could be taken from South Africa. What they called barefoot doctors in the 1960s in China might be one option. I am not expressing any support for the present regime in China but things like that are going to have to be done. Unfortunately, in prescribing such things, one is accused of being protectionist, or not being the full Monty in free trade and globalisation. But you are looking at a country that has nothing and who cannot compete. Their cash crop is coffee, which we all enjoy. Basically, that is not going to pay for very much. They are not going to get much out of that. They probably have tourism, but there is a problem there in that the environment has already been savaged enough.

So I would like to see the World Bank being pressured by the United Nations members and member states on the World Bank board to actually take note of their own guidelines, which they have not been doing. They actually have guidelines on environment, on labour policy, on social policies, et cetera, and they do not actually subscribe to their own policies, I believe. I cannot exactly quote now what I have read, but I read that somewhere. It might have been in the same article. If the member organisations—and Australia is one—actually brought the World Bank to task on its own constitution and its own policies, that might help as well.

Senator BOURNE—It might be worth our while to have a look at the World Bank web site and see what they have got for their guidelines. You mentioned an independent ombudsman on accountability, which sounds good. Can you expand on that a little bit?

Mr Hanney—I have picked that up from one of the submissions. Basically, it came out of the Rwanda experience. It was mentioned—and I got the tail end of it—by the last speaker. It was a matter of the will of the Security Council, but it was also a problem with the administration at the time—it was Boutros-Ghali, but I think Kofi Annan actually was in charge of that section. They pulled out after they had heard there was going to be a massacre. But there was no accountability. I am not going to point the finger at Kofi Annan and say that he is guilty of genocide, but you would have to say there is certainly something wrong when a United Nations bureaucrat in a position like that could, for whatever reason, just pull people out and allow a million people to be basically massacred.

There has got to be some accountability, and there does not seem to be. That is why there ought to be an independent ombudsperson who can basically take the United Nations administration to task if an issue arises. And there often are issues that get submerged. If the United Nations was a government, they would have been sacked the day after. If they are going to have the power to do things they also have to have the accountability. It has to go both ways.

Senator BOURNE—Do you think that accountability should perhaps come through the International Court of Justice?

Mr Hanney—I have not thought this out in minute detail—

Senator BOURNE—I have not either; I am doing the same as you.

Mr Hanney—but that could be a possibility. The ICJ do not have very many teeth.

Senator BOURNE—You would think that if they had any teeth it would be with the UN though, surely.

Mr Hanney—That is right, yes. It could be a possibility, yes.

Senator PAYNE—I want to follow on from Dr Southcott's questions. You were skirting around your views on military links between Indonesia and Australia. But, if I can encapsulate them, you basically do not approve of the military links between Australia and Indonesia that existed before this particular part of the East Timor crisis.

Mr Hanney—No. We never did.

Senator PAYNE—Can you take a question on notice. Major General Peter Cosgrove gave a speech about two weeks ago—perhaps even three now—to the Sydney Institute in Sydney on Tuesday, 21 June. It was a widely publicised speech recorded by the ABC in which he traversed at length some of the links that had been established between the two defence forces—the TNI and the ADF—over the years and what he, as the commander of INTERFET, had taken as positives from that process in relation to not just Indonesia but also other defence forces in our region. Can you take on notice that question. Could you have a look at his comments and then respond to the committee in the context of whether you think there is any value in what he has said. I would be grateful for that.

Mr Hanney—I would probably have to see the actual content and then get back to you on it.

Senator PAYNE—Yes, I do not expect you to do it without reading it. In your submission, you mention war crimes and crimes of genocide, referring positively to President Wahid's efforts at this stage. What level of confidence does your organisation have in the inquiry that is being undertaken in Indonesia at the moment? What level of confidence do you have in people like Attorney-General Marzuki Darusman to pursue this issue as he has been doing thus far and as he has also indicated to pursue the question of the behaviour of people in relation to the refugees, so-called, in West Timor?

Mr Hanney—We tend to think that President Abdurrahman Wahid is motivated by genuine concern. Probably what we could say is that we have hoped that something may come out of it but, as time goes on and with the pressures being brought to bear on the government—

Senator PAYNE—Meaning what?

Mr Hanney—Pressures by opposition members in Indonesia and by the military itself. So far all we have seen in the investigation is a number of lower ranking officers and soldiers. They still have not touched people like General Wiranto, who, I think most parties would agree, was the person at the top and in charge who gave the word. This was reported in the *Australian Financial Review* in February. It has also been covered by other Australian papers. I will have to check that out. But I think that has been fairly widely agreed—in spite of previous assumptions

that there were rogue forces, as the government was saying, and that Wiranto was a good guy. In fact, it came up that our intelligence knew that he was the pig in the poke, I suppose. Yes, we would prefer to see an international investigation for war crimes.

Senator PAYNE—On the question of an international inquiry, are you aware of the Commission of Inquiry into East Timor which was being carried out in December of last year? Are you aware of its findings and do you have a view on whether or not they were useful or constructive?

Mr Hanney—The international inquiry?

Senator PAYNE—The international Commission of Inquiry into East Timor.

Mr Fisher—Yes, we are aware of the findings and we are satisfied with most of them, but we think they did not go far enough in many areas—for example, in the area of the Australian government's responsibility for the whole thing last year.

Senator PAYNE—I am not sure that was part of their brief, but I might be wrong.

Mr Fisher—They had pretty broad terms of reference which included Australia's role in the whole history of the East Timor problem. So it should have touched on Australia's role in bringing about the whole crisis in East Timor. We do not think it paid enough attention to that for obvious reasons.

Can I elaborate on Marzuki Darusman, for example? It seems that perhaps we have more confidence in Marzuki Darusman's investigations than some of the shadowy forces in Indonesia itself who were trying to plant bombs. While we would like to see Marzuki Darusman pursue Wiranto and achieve—

Senator PAYNE—That is not a criticism of the Attorney-General; that is an observation of what is happening in Indonesia.

Mr Fisher—No, that is precisely what I am talking about. The Australian government has got a very important role to play here. It should come out very strongly condemning the intimidation of Marzuki Darusman and Abdurrahman Wahid and I feel that it is not doing that. In fact, if anything, it is playing a bit of a spoiler role in some areas. Where the Americans try to put pressure on the Indonesian military, Australia has frequently, in the last few months, tried to defray that pressure from the Americans.

ACTING CHAIR—I do not want to interrupt anyone here, but basically what we are trying to establish is the UN involvement, rather than what happened in East Timor in respect of what the Australians or the Americans should or should not have done.

What we are interested in from this inquiry's point of view is learning from the mistakes, if there were mistakes in Timor, or the shortcomings, and learning more about the role of the United Nations. If you want to relate Australia's role within the United Nations by all means you are free to do that, but I do not want to get into a debate about the rights or wrongs of Timor. I know it is difficult with your special brief on East Timor, but that is what the

committee is going to be doing, though—looking at the United Nations role. Some of us think it is a good example of shortcomings as well as strengths on the part of the UN in East Timor.

Mr Fisher—We are a bit short of time now. Could I just quickly answer some of the questions that have been put to us?

ACTING CHAIR—Yes, sure.

Mr Fisher—As to Prime Minister Howard's letter to President Habibie and what role did it play in bringing on a referendum, it did play a very significant role in bringing on a referendum, but I put it to you that the motive for Prime Minister Howard's letter—which I regard as unacceptable—was to try to remove the pebble in the shoe which Ali Alatas, the Indonesian foreign minister, frequently referred to in relation to East Timor. Prime Minister Howard's motive in sending that letter to President Habibie was actually to try to remove the pebble in the shoe of Australia pirating East Timor's oil through the Timor Gap treaty. That was his motive. Unfortunately for him it came unstuck because the East Timorese of course wanted independence, so this was something he should have been well informed about but apparently was not.

Another question: should the United Nations have sent peacekeepers to East Timor without Indonesian agreement? No, I do not think so. I think we should have operated inside the United Nations system, and in fact we did. The point that I was trying to make earlier was that in February—when it became clear that there was going to be a referendum in East Timor about whether they wanted independence from Indonesia or not—Dr Ashton Calvert, the head of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, went to Washington to speak to the US Assistant Secretary of State, Stanley Roth, about peacekeepers in East Timor. Roth was pushing the line that there should be peacekeepers and that pressure should be applied to the Indonesian government to achieve this, and Dr Ashton Calvert, with the full support of the Australian government, opposed that strongly. And for several months after that, in fact until 10 September 1999, the Australian government continued to oppose the placing of peacekeepers in East Timor.

Now that was the Australian government's role behind the scenes in the United Nations system, which we strongly disagree with. But we did operate within the UN system and we did prevent the pressure being applied to Indonesia. In fact, in the end, the reason why peacekeepers were sent was because the Americans applied pressure to send in peacekeepers which the Jakarta government could not resist. That could have been done in February. It could have prevented a whole lot of massacres.

One other question: what will CIET be doing now? That is partly up to you and how seriously you take our concerns. We could turn into a relief and aid organisation just helping the unfortunate East Timorese who have seen their homes and livelihoods totally destroyed by Indonesians and many people massacred, or we could continue to actively politically lobby if you do not take our concerns seriously. For example, I want to raise again Mr Hanney's question about what the Australian government intends to do about intelligence information which the Australian government has in its possession about the massacres and the part played in the massacres in East Timor by General Wiranto and some other generals, Adam Damiri and Zaki Anwar. It has this intelligence information and we want to know if it is going to be turned

over to the Indonesian authorities. We are told we should have a lot of faith in Marzuki Darusman's investigations. We would have more faith if the Australian government did make this information available to him. Does the Australian government intend to do that?

ACTING CHAIR—Okay. Do committee members have any further questions or comment? The committee members have no further comment. Is there any last issue you want to leave with us?

Mr Fisher—On that last question, I note that Judith Wright actually sent that letter, in tandem with a lot of other people, about a week before her death, so it is almost a dying wish of Judith Wright, so I want to know how seriously you are going to take Judith Wright's dying wish.

ACTING CHAIR—Let us not get emotional about it.

Senator BOURNE—You are not alone, Mr Fisher. A lot of people in the parliament, including the Democrats, including the opposition, I think, and probably a lot of members of the government are on side with you on this.

ACTING CHAIR—The other point I want to stress—which I have stressed before—is that this is not an inquiry into Australia's role in East Timor. This is a subcommittee of the Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade. We actually visited East Timor last year and met with the special UN human rights inquiry team there, and issues such as the one that you have raised with us are covered in a report that we published on that visit. It is a perfectly legitimate claim that you are raising, but there are other avenues for it within the parliament. Basically, our mandate is to look at Australia's role in the United Nations in a post-Cold War period. Maybe that intelligence will come into it, but it is not the main focus—so do not ask us how seriously we are going to take Judith Wright's dying wish.

Mr Fisher—This comes back to the whole question—

ACTING CHAIR—Let us not have a debate about it now.

Mr Fisher—of Australia's operation within the United Nations and how it undermines the normal operations of the United Nations which would have, in the normal course of events, sent peacekeepers to East Timor in a responsible manner to prevent the massacres that happened last year.

ACTING CHAIR—Okay.

Mr Fisher—You say 'okay', but I am not satisfied—

ACTING CHAIR—I do not care whether you are satisfied or not. I have told you the reference of our inquiry. Your time has now expired. You have had a good hearing before the committee, and we have listened to your comments. We might not respond to them immediately, but you have put your concerns on the public record—

Mr Fisher—Yes, I have one more concern to put.

ACTING CHAIR—You will have to be quick. The committee will consider those concerns when we are writing up our report. We are not going to make commitments here and now. We try not to be emotional in this because we have had a lot of views since we started this hearing—very strong views—for and against. What we have to do, in an unbiased way, is weigh up the evidence and make a recommendation to the government. Do you have one more comment?

Mr Fisher—You made a very important point. You did go to East Timor yourself to see the situation. I went to East Timor to observe the vote last year—

ACTING CHAIR—So did some of our committee members—Senator Payne and Senator Bourne.

Mr Fisher—Yes, I know. I am concerned that all of our lives are in danger as a result of the Australian government's actions last year.

ACTING CHAIR—Thank you very much for that. Thank you, gentlemen, for appearing before the committee and for your submission. If there are any further details that you want to include, please forward those on to the secretary. Mr Fisher, Hansard may wish to clarify the comments you made before you came to the table.

Mr Fisher—I thank you all for listening to us as well.

[11.50 a.m.]

GRAY, Mr Ron, Treasurer, Australian Peace Committee (South Australian Branch)

JARRETT, Mr Don, Chairperson, Australian Peace Committee (South Australian Branch)

ACTING CHAIR—Welcome, gentlemen. I must advise you that the proceedings here today are legal proceedings of the parliament and warrant the same respect which proceedings in the respective houses of parliament demand. The subcommittee prefers that all evidence be given in public, but should you at any stage wish to give any evidence in private you may ask to do so and the subcommittee will give consideration to your request. We have received your submission and it has been authorised for publication. Did you want to make any alterations, corrections or additions to that submission?

Mr Jarrett—No, we don't.

ACTING CHAIR—I now invite you to make a short opening statement before the committee proceeds to questions.

Mr Jarrett—I suspect the reason we are here is that we are a peace organisation, as is quite obvious, and we are concerned about the conflicts that have happened throughout our world for many years. We find that many of the conflicts arose from nations very early in the century wanting to get a greater share of the spoils of other countries and imperialist countries, for example England, looking to colonise various countries in Africa and other places around the world—we know the old saying, 'The sun never set on the British Empire.' Over the 20th century we have seen the liberation struggles taking place. We believe these conflicts continue for much the same reasons. Although nation states are disappearing in this process, modern national corporations are taking over that role and it would appear to us that now we are in a period of colonialism based on capital. We are concerned about that. Resulting out of that we find nation states, particularly the most powerful states, wanting to protect their interest often by threat, and one of those threats is a nuclear threat.

I have been to Japan on several occasions, and last year again I attended the Hiroshima conference against atom and hydrogen bombs. I have become aware that the United States, for example, are at this moment having some impact on the Japanese government in relation to American bases in Japan. They have certainly influenced the Japanese government to make it possible for the United States to use Japan as a rather large base. I think that is there because they are threatening countries like China and also ensuring that on the Korean Peninsula whatever happens there is in favour of the United States and particularly United States multinational companies. We have also become aware recently that the United States have had nuclear weapons in Japan since 1948, I think it is—and I would be willing to be corrected on that, but I am sure that is the case—and now the peace forces in Japan are concerned about that issue.

So we come down to what the role is of the Australian government in the United Nations in terms of moving towards a situation where nuclear weapons are completely eliminated from our

planet. We are disappointed that in the recent nuclear non-proliferation treaty conference, though there appeared to be some progress made there, there are no definite plans for the eradication of nuclear weapons. That concerns us considerably.

Despite the fact that we are a peace organisation, we are also concerned that conflict arises out of the attainment of natural resources throughout the planet. A number of conflicts that are happening—particularly in Africa, for example, but also in Central and South America—are caused by people wanting their freedom on the one hand, whereas other people are wanting to control those resources. Article 55 of the United Nations International Economic and Social Cooperation states:

> With a view to the creation of conditions of stability and well-being which are necessary for peaceful and friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, the United Nations shall promote:
>
> > a. higher standards of living, full employment, and conditions of economic and social progress and development—

I wonder just how serious influential governments are concerned about that question, because I do not see or hear our government, for example, being determined to change that situation. It is the end of the first week of the GST and the argument is that this is going to result in a larger gap between rich and poor. If we take that microscopic view and put it into a world context, we see the same thing happening in the developing countries. We are told that competition policy will solve that problem, but competition policy has in fact caused the problem in my view. That problem creates conflict that we are opposed to.

Just taking the front page of the new *Internationalist,* there is an article titled 'Drop the debt'. There has been much discussion about that issue, but from reading the *Guardian Weekly* recently, only two countries have taken that seriously. The 'Drop the debt' article stated the figure of $US2 trillion as a result of natural disasters, Cold War conflicts and unfair trade. I would like to see our government playing a much more forceful role in this world to try to resolve those conflicts. I might leave it at that.

ACTING CHAIR—Did you want to add anything, Mr Gray?

Mr Gray—I could say something briefly. The Australian Peace Committee's constitution says that we support all the peace issues of the United Nations. While that covers a broad range of political things, the peace issues is where most of our emphasis is. We see the government not following those peace issues and perhaps siding in the main with the US on things such as nuclear disarmament in the NPT conference. In spite of all the lobbying, in spite of resolutions that were passed in the Senate and whatnot, the Australian government just would not make a positive stand. When we heard Mr Downer's speech, we were most disappointed because there was not even any fire it in, not even any words. We took up the Morgan survey on what Australian citizens want, and 92 per cent of the population wanted the government to take a positive step on nuclear disarmament and they just have not done it. That is one of the beefs that we have.

ACTING CHAIR—Thank you, gentlemen. Are there any questions from the committee?

Senator PAYNE—You did not actually expand in your verbal submission on the recommendations in your submission about the eradication of child labour. I must admit I advance this issue again somewhat tentatively, given the reaction I got in Sydney the other day. But I am very interested in your advocacy for the eradication of child labour. I know that yesterday the President of the United States made a further statement on their efforts in this regard. I wondered if you wanted to make any more comments on your views here. In Nepal, for example, two weeks ago, they legislatively resolved to abolish child labour in Nepal which will see some quarter of a million children who are being exploited in that context—and I use exploited child labour as my context—assisted in this way. I would be interested for you to expand on your remarks.

Mr Jarrett—I was concerned recently, reading an article in the *Australian*, regarding the problems created by NAFTA. Mexico was pretty much a basket case 10 years ago and then the competition policy came into being. They set up zones in Mexico. Growth seemed to be happening and people started getting incomes. But then, suddenly, crunch. We find many Mexicans, and certainly families, moving into California to work in the fruit growing areas. It was rather distressing to read that the American multinational fruit companies are spraying these people with insecticides, or whatever it is that they spray fruit trees with, and that is quite harmful to their health. Although there is a law in California that there is a minimum age of 12 years to be working in these areas, there are kids of six and seven working in these plantations along with their parents and being sprayed and being sick. It seems that this is happening in the land of the free. How could it happen and what role does the Australian government play in the United Nations about this kind of question? Unless governments start complaining bitterly and take some action, then I am not sure how we solve the problem of child labour. It is very Dickensian, and I think it is an indictment on humanity, actually, that this is allowed to continue to happen.

I also was aware that leaders, not necessarily trade union leaders but leaders in this community who were opposed to this kind of action were eliminated in one way or another. So how do people have the freedom to voice their opposition to these kinds of conditions? It is a disaster, basically. But how do you solve it? I am not sure how you solve it. If it could be solved easily I am sure people would have done something about it by this, but it certainly shows the power and authority of these massive multinational companies, many of which have incomes and expenditures far greater than the GNPs of some countries, and that is how they happen to be that way, because of their exploitation of these kids, not to mention their parents. I do not know what else I could say in answer to that question, but it would seem to me that the Australian government, if they have any humanity at all—and I am sure most of them do—should raise their voice in the United Nations and the government should ask their representatives in the United Nations to be quite forceful against these kinds of exploitative behaviours of such a powerful country as the United States.

Senator PAYNE—You refer again in your submission, I think favourably, to the fact that much reform has taken place through UN agencies such as UNICEF, UNHCR, WHO, et cetera, and we are obviously in our terms of reference looking at the whole reform process in relation to the UN. I am wondering whether you think that those agencies can take a more active or, if you like, a more leading role in advocacy for reform of the huge structure to which they belong, and whether they can inform communities more effectively about the need for perhaps some change or the benefits of change that has already occurred.

Mr Jarrett—I think they certainly should have a role in that. However, I wonder whether they have the freedom to do that.

Senator PAYNE—That is why I asked the question.

Mr Jarrett—I wonder whether they have the freedom to do that—I do not know, quite frankly—but it is something that we ought to be looking at. I think attached to that is the funding of the United Nations. Looking back at the Yugoslav situation of a couple of years ago, there was a deliberate attempt to avoid the United Nations Security Council and to use NATO, in fact, to attack Yugoslavia. If they have that sort of power and authority then I wonder how we can—being a cynic of longstanding—

Senator PAYNE—You are in august company, I suspect.

Mr Jarrett—Probably, yes. Being a cynic of long standing, I do not know how we can do that, unless we demand governments to fulfil their obligations to fund the United Nations, as they should be doing. I do not know how you do that with a country that has a large supply of nuclear weapons and that shows no restraint in attacking small countries to get its way. I would like to see some of these organisations being more open and expressive in their desire for the kinds of reforms that would be in the best interests of people.

Senator PAYNE—Thank you, Mr Jarrett.

Dr SOUTHCOTT—I wanted to ask you about the Security Council. What proposals do you have for reform of the Security Council? Do you think that the veto power prevented the United Nations from actually doing anything for the first 40 years of its life?

Mr Jarrett—I suspect that there are a couple of arguments about this. I suspect that the operation of the veto in the Cold War situation may have had some use; but, since the end of the Cold War, I do not think the veto situation has been a democratic process. We suggest that the permanent positions on the Security Council should be made up of one representative from each of the six main regions of the world: Europe, North America, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia-Pacific—with Australia and New Zealand being part of the Asia-Pacific group—West Asia and Africa. I think the United Nations has to be made more democratic and that the General Assembly has to have much more influence over the role of the Security Council. You may need to draw me more on that.

Dr SOUTHCOTT—Already the non-permanent members are on a regional basis—although, historically, we are based with Western Europe and others.

Mr Jarrett—That is right.

Dr SOUTHCOTT—This would be similar. You are suggesting that there will be non-permanent members coming from regions. But that already exists, doesn't it?

Mr Jarrett—But to take away the veto—I think that the veto is something that does not assist in resolving conflicts in a more democratic way. It tends to give advantage to the major powers. If we think about it, the role of the major powers in the First World War, for example,

was about divide and rule. I think that the major powers are basically controlled by multinational companies. After all, they provide the Democrats and Republicans in the United States with a fair amount of money to do their bidding. Under the veto system, they are basically vetoing in the interests of the massive multinational institutions around the world.

Senator BOURNE—I will follow on from that. I am not sure whether you were here when Ms Picone was speaking to us from WILPF. She and a lot of other witnesses made the point about the very recently increasing obvious presence of multinational corporations within the UN—things like the Davos Forum and what she most attractively called 'BINGOs', business interest NGOs, doing things with funding for the UN. Can you tell us whether you think that is increasing and whether there are any ways we can stop that increase?

Mr Gray—I think it is increasing; that is for sure. But I have not given a lot of thought as to how you stop it.

Senator BOURNE—We have not either. If you do think of something, it will be useful if you can get back to us.

Mr Jarrett—I think perhaps it might be reformed by changes to the structure of the United Nations. For example, the Security Council should lose its veto; other countries and smaller countries should play a more active role, the General Assembly should play a greater active role—and, hopefully, through those channels, that kind of process might change. The countries that are being exploited to the extreme have very little influence in the United Nations, for one reason or another. If we take a look at the Whaling Commission here just the other day, we will see that there appears to be allegations about Japan's influence on countries that have no coastline by their funding of those organisations for all sorts of other reasons. Those organisations then vote for Japan to proceed with the exploitation of the whale population. If we can do something to avoid that kind of situation, then maybe we have a chance. But I think that countries are in such a desperate situation for some kind of assistance that they will take whatever they can because of their plight.

Senator BOURNE—We also had a fair bit of evidence yesterday about alternative ways of funding the UN, like the proposed Tobin tax which is just about to be looked at now, thank goodness, and a few other things. Do you have a view on that?

Mr Jarrett—No, I must say I have not considered that.

Senator BOURNE—It was not in your submission, so it is a bit unfair to even ask, really—sorry.

Mr Gray—I think it is right that nations should pay according to their ability to pay, and that is basically what applies. What we considered with looking at the set-up of the Security Council was that three nations out of the five permanent members are European countries. So you leave out South America and south Asia—and India, the second most populous nation in the world, is treated like a nobody. The resentment grows, which is one of the reasons we think that India developed nuclear weapons. They could see that the five permanent members that were on the Security Council were doing nothing to fulfil their obligations to negotiate to get rid of the weapons. While you have situations like that, resentment builds. We think that, if the Security

Council lost its veto and it was made up from countries representing regions of the world—and we say six—we can go a long way to removing some of these problems.

ACTING CHAIR—The only difficulty with giving up the veto powers is that those are the holders who have had to vote to give it up, and I think that may be the stumbling block that we are all facing. The committee has no further questions. Are there any last issues you wish to leave with the committee?

Mr Jarrett—I am wondering whether, as a result of the questions asked, if we have any additional information that we would like to provide—

ACTING CHAIR—That was my next paragraph. I was going to say that, if you have any additional information that you want to put to the committee, you could forward it to the secretariat. Perhaps you could see them before you go. You will receive a copy of the transcript of the evidence you have given here today. If there is anything extra that you particularly want to forward to us, it would not be put into the evidence you have given us, but it could be put in as an additional submission or as an exhibit. It will come to the committee and all committee members will receive a copy of that. Thank you for your attendance and for taking the trouble of putting in a submission to us.

Mr Jarrett—Thank you very much.

[12.18 p.m.]

JENKIN, Ms Rebecca Anne, National Vice-President, National President, United Nations Youth Association of Australia.

McDOUGALL, Ms Carrie, National President, United Nations Youth Association of Australia.

ACTING CHAIR—Welcome. I must advise you that the proceedings here today are legal proceedings of the parliament and warrant the same respect which proceedings in the respective houses of parliament demand. Although the subcommittee does not require you to give evidence on oath, you should be aware that this does not alter the importance of the occasion. The deliberate misleading of the subcommittee may be regarded as a contempt of parliament. The subcommittee also prefers that all evidence is given in public but, should you at any stage wish to give any evidence in private, you may ask to do so and the committee will consider that request. We have received your submission, which has been authorised for publication. Do you have any corrections or changes to that submission?

Ms McDougall—No.

ACTING CHAIR—I invite you to make a short opening statement and then the committee will have some questions to put to you.

Ms McDougall—We would like to thank you for the opportunity to address this committee. We feel it is really important to include the viewpoint of a youth organisation, especially one which has specialist UN knowledge.

The main things we would like to highlight are in this memorandum. Our submission reflects our belief that, while the UN is in need of ongoing constructive reform, this cannot occur without the constructive engagement of member states. The UN is only as strong as its members, and the first thing we would like to do is to express great disappointment in the announcement that Prime Minister John Howard will not be attending the millennium summit.

In reading some of the other submissions, we were particularly concerned by the wide-ranging advocacy for Australia to adopt a policy of isolationism. We believe that such a position in untenable in the modern world. Australia must actively engage in the international community in order to keep abreast of technological, economic, cultural and political globalisation. The UN—and the multilateral relations it fosters—sits at the centre of this international community.

A second point to understand is that the UN is not a world government. The UN is constrained by its member states as to what it is and is not permitted to do. In addition, state sovereignty is enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, and the very admittance of states to the United Nations is a key indication that a state has actually achieved sovereignty. In further relation to sovereignty, we want to take this opportunity to note that the proposed international criminal court will only exercise jurisdiction if states have acquiesced to that jurisdiction, and that the court will only entertain cases in instances where the national court of the individuals is not concerned, for the court will only try individuals where that domestic judiciary are unable or unwilling to try that individual. I would also add at this point that the

court will also only hear charges of universal crimes to which party states have agreed. Further in relation to sovereignty, it must be noted that the Australian government must authorise the inclusion of any Australian troops in peacekeeping or peace enforcement missions, and that the fact that an Australian commander has the final say over matters pertaining to such troops means that the inclusion of Australian soldiers in peacekeeping forces is not in breach of section 68 of the Constitution.

It is similarly only with government ratification and incorporation in domestic legislation that any international treaty becomes binding upon Australian citizens. This is the same as any other legislation; it is only the source of the legislation which is different, and it should be noted that Australia's democratic system offers the Australian people the opportunity to exercise their right to vote if they disapprove of such legislation.

The UN aims to address international issues which cannot be effectively solved within states, not to usurp the sovereignty of states. By the same token, it is necessary to note that, whilst the concept of state sovereignty is integral to international relations, it must not be used as a shield behind which states hide in order to perpetrate gross human rights violations. While states will and should continue to enjoy independence, the ability to deal effectively with issues that affect people worldwide and which the international community has a rightful interest in is dependent upon these issues not remaining within the exclusive preserve of states. In particular, the interests of international peace and security sometimes require international intervention in internal crises, particularly in instances where humanitarian relief is urgently needed and desired by a civilian population. The challenge facing the UN in the 21st century is to comprehensively define the circumstances and criteria for justified intervention.

UNYA also wishes to draw attention to the fact that Australia needs to adopt a more consistent approach to its international obligations. Recent discussions at the federal parliamentary level have shown that the Australian government is happy to rely on treaties comprising the international narcotics regime, for example, but happily ignores provisions in other treaties, particularly those related to human rights, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

UNYA wishes to also express concern at the recently announced internal review of the human rights treaty monitoring body system. We reject criticisms that bodies are biased, politicised or being hijacked by NGOs. We would be supportive of any outcomes reached by the government that aim at strengthening these committees, such as the provision of increased resources. However, we do not believe that pressures on resources, et cetera, have led to the politicisation of the system and would be gravely concerned by any outcome of the review which would undermine the effectiveness of the human rights regime.

Lastly, we wish to note that the United Nations is a political organisation. Member states will have differing degrees of influence. However, the history of involvement of many middle powers like Australia in the United Nations system demonstrates the effectiveness of the forum in allowing us to exercise a far greater influence over the international community than would otherwise be possible. It is crucial that Australia remain involved with and committed to the United Nations. UNYA urges the committee to recommend that Australia should take an active role in the positive reform of the UN and commit to taking a key role in the development of

initiatives such as regional coalitions of the willing, the inclusion of NGOs in humanitarian intervention and the establishment of an international criminal court. Thank you.

ACTING CHAIR—Thank you very much. Ms Jenkin, did you have anything to add?

Ms Jenkin—No, I am just here for questions.

ACTING CHAIR—You mentioned your concern about some of the submissions. I might say that we have had a wide-ranging list of submissions from, let us say, both extreme ends. It was strongly put to us—I think in Brisbane somewhere this last week—that we must disregard all submissions that were perceived as pro-UN. Let me assure you that, as I said to an earlier witness, we do not take a view. We receive a wide range of submissions canvassing an almost unbelievable list of opinions and suggestions. Our role is to listen to the submissions that are put up, evaluate them and write a report or make recommendations to the government of the day. So rest assured that, although there may be a wide-ranging list of submissions, we look at them all and take no view on whether they are pro or anti the UN system.

Senator PAYNE—One of the witnesses who was heard earlier in the week said that they thought some of the negative views that were propounded in Australia about the United Nations came about as a result of lack of awareness and lack of education and information about the UN—its constituent bodies, its operations and so on. And, as you say—I think at the conclusion of your submission—and others have:

> The United Nations, however, can be no stronger than the collective will of its Member States.

What does your organisation do to promote awareness and information about the United Nations, amongst young Australians in particular, so that we get a more informed argument? There will obviously be people who may still disagree, but at least it will be well informed disagreement.

Ms Jenkin—We have divisions in every state and territory in Australia. Each of those divisions carries out a range of educational activities; mostly focused on secondary students, but also involving tertiary students. For instance, in Victoria they have an annual conference of over 400 secondary students. We also have educational packages, which are now on CD-ROM, which are taken into primary schools and delivered in classrooms and so forth. This allows primary school children to start to develop basic ideas and international perspectives on global issues.

Our major event each year is our annual conference, which we are at now, where we select high school students—led, for the most part, by tertiary students—to hear a wide array of speakers. Then throughout the year in the divisions there are speakers nights, competitions. A lot of divisions run security council competitions for students to get a better understanding of the nature of security issues. At a lot of these conferences and competitions students represent a country so that they do not come at an issue just from an Australian or Western or industrialised perspective, but rather have a range of perspectives. We estimate that in the course of the year we are in contact with—about how many students, Carrie?

Ms McDougall—Students or community?

Ms Jenkin—Both.

Ms McDougall—Community would be thousands. In addition to the divisional activities that Rebecca has mentioned, we also have representatives at youth speakouts and at community fora as well as NGO fora and governmental fora. And we are sending an increasing number of representatives to international events where these sorts of issues are discussed. UNYA is responsible for selecting Australia's youth representative, and we are trying to publicise that position and seek youth opinion on a lot of the issues that the youth representative will be consulted about.

Ms Jenkin—Part of their role is to come back and share that with the youth at conferences and so forth. Andrew Hudson, the last representative, has come back and spoken at this conference of his direct experiences at the UN. Education is our primary aim. What we find when conducting conferences and so forth is that students, young people, are desperate for information about international issues, with a small number of exceptions. For the most part, an international perspective and global issues are not discussed widely in school curriculum, yet they are an integral part of understanding the world around you at the moment. We really see ourselves as filling that gap, to a certain extent.

Senator PAYNE—My final question—and I concede that this is more for my own information and is not within the terms of reference—is: what are the key issues that young people in Australia are raising with UNYA in relation to the United Nations? Our terms of reference are wide ranging, and I am wondering whether many of those are included or whether there are others that it might be useful to advise the committee about.

Ms McDougall—We actually held last night at the conference a youth motion where students broke into small discussion groups and raised key issues that they are concerned about. As you have correctly identified, these range from the eradication of debt for lesser developed countries to indigenous issues, education issues, health issues and the rights of women, youth, children and minorities. I really do not think there is any way of encapsulating them. The students at our conference have actually gone through a selection process, but even when we go to the primary school level to take really basic international issue workshops, the level of knowledge they demonstrate and the interest in international issues occupy such a wide ambit that we are constantly surprised.

Senator PAYNE—Thank you.

Dr SOUTHCOTT—Thank you for your submission, which is very comprehensive and has addressed most of the terms of reference. In the nineties, we have seen the United Nations having to face the problem of intrastate conflict, and that was not really envisaged when the UN charter was drawn up. You did say that we should recognise within the United Nations that there are some issues that should not just be the preserve of states. Have you any ideas on how the United Nations should deal with intrastate conflict?

Ms Jenkin—Certain legal norms have been developed as the UN have been trying to deal with those situations we have seen in Somalia, Haiti and so forth. As you would be well aware, the idea of humanitarian intervention is a very complex and controversial one. To a certain extent, solutions can be found within the charter itself if you approach the interpretation of it as

a dynamic instrument if you like. Obviously, the concerns are that the UN cannot go in everywhere. What is the limit for them to go in? When there is a small skirmish, do they send in a multinational force and so forth? The charter says that the Security Council must determine a threat to international peace and security for them to be able to go in or authorise intervention in a situation. Those things in the past 10 years have constituted mass flows of refugees, gross violations of human rights and those sorts of things. I think the Security Council practice provides a limit on it.

Obviously, the situation is imperfect because, as you say, the UN charter was not designed to address those sorts of situations, but if we are going to have a meaningful, pre-eminent global organisation, the solutions have got to be found for the most part within the charter itself. I think that can be done if you look at the way it has been interpreted by the Security Council in the past.

Dr SOUTHCOTT—So what you are saying is that the practice has evolved within the UN charter?

Ms Jenkin—Yes.

Ms McDougall—I would also add that, as far as I am aware, within the UN system there is a great deal of discussion about the development of a code of practice or a set of criteria which would allow for the consistent application so situations like Chechnya do not evolve, where people thought there was no oil there so they were not interested in intervening. It is to avoid those problem areas. As we note in our submission, a lot of developing countries, in particular, do have legitimate concerns that this could lead to an erosion of sovereignty and some sort of neo-colonisation. I would agree with Rebecca that the Security Council and UN organs are fully aware of these concerns and are doing their best to establish international legal norms.

Ms Jenkin—I think the challenge is consistency though and I think most would agree with that: it is not necessarily the development of the norms themselves but consistency within their application. Obviously, with the difficulties with the structure of the Security Council and so forth, it is very hard to formulate concrete proposals of how to address that.

Dr SOUTHCOTT—If I could go on with that, you have also addressed the issue of regional coalitions of the willing which have worked in different contexts and different regions in the last 10 years. But what if you have a situation where there is no coalition of the willing?

Ms Jenkin—It is a difficult question. Over the last few years it is possible that coalitions of the willing have been more successful or more appropriate or more able to carry out the job more effectively or with more expediency than a peacekeeping force has been able to do. I am wondering where there would be such a situation. I would hope that a situation such as the one you are alluding to would be a rarity. For instance, it is argued that Western states and the industrialised world do not have much interest in intervening in situations in Africa. However, other countries in the region do, because of the instability it is causing to their region. It is possibly the case that those situations would be very rare. That is all I have to say about that.

Ms McDougall—You are talking about a very difficult situation and the international community as a whole has yet to reach a consensus. UNYA would argue this: the fact that there

might be a situation in one particular country that is not addressed by the United Nations, and the United Nations receives criticism for ignoring that particular situation, is not a very good reason for disallowing the UN or withdrawing support for the UN and coalitions of the willing to intervene and save thousands of lives in other situations. I guess we take as good as we can get.

Senator BOURNE—Following on from what Senator Payne was asking, how widely are you able to disseminate your CD-ROM, for instance? How many primary schools would that get to?

Ms Jenkin—We should have our Victorian division here because they are the leaders in it. At the moment there is probably about three states who rigorously implement it. In Victoria over the last couple of years there has probably been up to 100 schools within the state. Western Australia is also a very strong state. At one stage last year, Western Australia could not keep up with the demand. We do not charge anything for it. We are all volunteers and they were doing almost one a week, I believe. We are almost at saturation point in the numbers of students that we can cater for with our conferences and so forth.

Senator BOURNE—How do you go with the different states and governments with getting into schools and being able to tell students what they want to know?

Ms McDougall—We approached DETYA, which provided us with state contacts, and we have been working with those state contacts for a long time. Although there is no nationalised curriculum, especially at primary school level, we found an enormous hole surrounding civics education and that has meant that it slots right in.

Senator BOURNE—You have had no problems, for instance, with any one government saying, 'No, we won't have you in schools'?

Ms Jenkin—Not at all. For the most part it is a matter of whether schools are interested. The schools often ask us to come and implement this program, or we contact them and they are interested in it. It really is not an issue of getting state government permission, as far as I know, at the divisional level.

Ms McDougall—We have received permission to contact the schools but that was the end of the communication. They were happy for us to go ahead and contact schools, although now, as Rebecca mentioned, we have reached saturation point. We are hoping to begin disseminating the packages to teachers so they themselves can teach the lessons and run workshops so that we can reach a greater number of students. Just last week a school on the north-west coast of Tasmania funded a group of UNYA members from the Tasmanian division to travel up to the north-west coast—they also paid for their accommodation. When you have regional schools that perhaps do not have a lot of money to spend on those projects willing to contribute financial support, it shows the demand that is out there.

Ms Jenkin—In fact, in the next few months, the Victorian division is planning to hold a regional conference in Albury-Wodonga and at that they are hoping to have a teachers' seminar to assist teachers learn how to deliver the package. As most of the members of the division are based in Melbourne, they cannot be going out to regional schools all the time.

Senator BOURNE—You are very organised. It would be useful to send a copy of your CD-ROM to all your members and senators—at least one to this committee.

ACTING CHAIR—Yes, indeed.

Senator BOURNE—Where do you get your funding from. and is it adequate? It is never adequate, is it?

Ms McDougall—No. We are a non-profit organisation, as we mentioned in our submission. We receive $500 a year from the United Nations Association of Australia, which receives a $10,000 grant from the federal government. We have been very lucky with the executive members we have elected—they have been happy to cover costs, like communication costs, off their own back. We have a lot of enthusiastic, dynamic members so we are able to share the workload out. No one person has to bear the burden. It would be good to secure additional funding—we have enormous plans to seek sponsorship from law firms and the like over the next few years. Our potential to reach people is enormous.

Senator BOURNE—It certainly sounds it to me; it is extraordinary. At 9.6 in your submission you talk about reform of the General Assembly. We have not heard a lot about that; we have heard a lot about reform of the Security Council. You have some interesting points. How did you come across these points? How did you come to even consider reform of the General Assembly?

Ms McDougall—The association has developed national policy platforms on a wide range of issues, and reform is one of those particular platforms. That is based on our existing policy. We run a lot of workshops, conferences and seminars on the General Assembly, and those have acted like think tanks and we have come up with things. We are also highly supportive of the reforms proposed by Kofi Annan, and a lot of those stem from ideas initiated by the secretariat.

Senator BOURNE—Your evidence is based on some of the best knowledge of the UN that we have had in any submission. Thank you, very much for that—it has been great.

ACTING CHAIR—How is the UN youth representative selected? With difficulty, I know you are going to say.

Ms Jenkin—Last year was the first year that we sent a youth representative. Because of timing—we got confirmation from the minister that he had accepted our proposal only a few weeks before the person would have needed to have jetted off to the GA—that person was selected at our national conference from the people there. It has always been our intention to have the position open to all Australian youth and well publicised. Unfortunately, we have not received funding for that from DFAT. When we met with the minister he made it quite clear that that simply would not be a possibility with this position. The next position—and it is going to be Carrie going to this coming General Assembly—was also selected from the ranks of UNYA.

Ms McDougall—It was open to any UNYA member. It was advertised on our web site.

ACTING CHAIR—The position is going to be filled this year? There was some concern that it was not going to be filled this year.

Ms McDougall—Yes.

Ms Jenkin—However, with the next one we are starting in about September. We have a detailed time line and plan sorted out. It will be open to all Australian youth. We are hoping to advertise it widely, if we can get free advertisements, in newspapers. We have received some web space on DETYA's web site, on divisional sites, on university sites and that sort of thing. We have set up an application and selection process which we hope will be well publicised—somewhat along the lines of the youth round table where any interested young person can apply. That is our aim.

ACTING CHAIR—It is a great thing that we have a youth representative there. We are one of the few nations in the world that does have a youth representative. I was recently at the UN for the millennium NGO conference, and out of that conference one of the suggestions which came out was that the representation at the UN be much more diversified. They suggested that youth be part of the permanent representation. I could say that, for the last couple of years, Australia has had a youth representative there as part of the full, accredited representation to the UN. I was a little worried at that time because there was great debate about it. But let us hope that that representation continues. If we as members of parliament can do anything to ensure that there is a position for youth—and I think it should be more widely advertised as well—then by all means use us for any extra lobbying. I do not have to tell you how to lobby; nevertheless, there is a supporting arm here. Are you going to be the representative this year?

Ms McDougall—Yes, I am.

ACTING CHAIR—Senator Ferguson, who chairs this committee, and I, as the deputy chair of this committee, are the parliamentarians who will be there this year, so we will probably see quite a bit of you. How the members of parliament are selected is a very democratic process. I came up after a nine-year cycle, I might say, so I have been planning this year for nine years—but enough of that.

Ms Jenkin—May I make a point on the youth representative position. The only thing I would clarify—and which might undermine the openness of the position—is that currently the position is unfunded. Carrie is up for a massive bill at the end of that. She has been trying desperately to get funding.

ACTING CHAIR—That is the other thing: by the time we present our report, the UN will be over and done with. You should be lobbying your local member and lobbying us. By all means write a letter either to me or, better still, to the chair of this committee, Senator Alan Ferguson, and make the point that that position is unfunded. Quite frankly, if they fund members of parliament to go there, I do not see why they should not fund the youth representative. I cannot speak for my other colleagues, but I am sure that they, like me, would very strongly support that position being funded, as other positions are funded. It is such a benefit to Australia to have a youth representative there. I just cannot believe that the government is not funding that.

Senator BOURNE—I have one more question. Is it the case that you send somebody to The Hague, to the ICJ, on a similar basis, or are you not funded?

Ms Jenkin—You are probably speaking about the internships that they have at the ICJ, the International Criminal Court, for the former Yugoslavia and so forth. We do not. Those sorts of opportunities are things that we publicise within UNYA, and it is up to individual members to take advantage of them. My understanding is that, for the most part, they are for graduates, and a lot of our members are younger or at university. The largest model United Nations of secondary students is held in The Hague. It is called the THIMUN—The Hague International Model United Nations—conference, and every year we send a delegation to that. Delegates are selected from this national conference today.

Senator BOURNE—Do they all pay for themselves?

Ms Jenkin—They all pay for themselves, but each year they do remarkably well with private sponsorship. Last year they obtained almost $60,000 in private sponsorship from local companies, local government and some state governments. We see it as part of a learning process for these delegates to try to obtain that funding for themselves—and, for the most part, they do very well.

Senator BOURNE—Thank you.

Ms McDougall—I was going to say that there is another youth representative in the UNESCO commission—Cameron Forbes. He was selected by the government and he is the only other young representative person as such. The youth representatives who are sent to individual conferences are quite often just plucked, and increasingly from the youth round table, but with no consultation or election or selection procedures. So we would like to use this opportunity to say that we believe there should be some provision for youth representatives to be at all major UN conferences and organs where an Australian delegation is going, or that there should at least be some consultation with not only the youth community but also other groups of Australian society.

ACTING CHAIR—Are there any further questions from the committee members? Are there any last issues you wanted to leave with us?

Ms Jenkin—I do not think so.

ACTING CHAIR—Thank you very much for appearing before the subcommittee today. If there is any additional material that you want the committee to have, please forward it to the secretariat. On behalf of my colleagues, I compliment you on a very good submission. You will be sent a copy of the transcript of evidence, and you can make corrections. Again, thank you very much for appearing before us.

[12.52 p.m.]

SOUTHCOTT, Mrs Heather Joyce, State President and National Vice-President, United Nations Association of Australia.

ACTING CHAIR—Welcome, Mrs Southcott. I understand you wish to make a statement. You know these are proceedings of the parliament and so please make the submission to us.

Mrs Southcott—Firstly, I am not sure whether you have tabled the report of Andrew Hudson, who was the last youth representative from Australia in UNGA.

ACTING CHAIR—No.

Mrs Southcott—It will be very useful. The back pages have information. There are 12 other countries that have youth representatives; some of them not genuinely elected. It gives you all the details of how they are funded, what funding they provide, and how they are selected. There are 12 at present. I think Andrew was very influential when he was there last time trying to persuade nine more to consider it. The final statement in it is that Australia has the only youth representative not fully funded. The Australian government supplied some money for accommodation; every other country gives full funding on the same basis as any other representative or any other delegate.

The comment I wanted to make was basically that UNYA—United Nations Youth Association—really is the good news out of the United Nations Association. Their development is something I am extremely proud of. I was a former president of the United Nations Association at the national level. I am deputy national president and have been president in South Australia for many years.

Following the death of Dag Hammarskjold, UNAA set up what we call the Dag Hammarskjold Memorial Interschools Conference which was held every year on the national conference basis. But in those days the United Nations Association did it. We put it on, the young people came, and we did all the organisation. International Youth Year—and people say that no good comes out of international years but good did come out of this one—was particularly on a need for training of young people—I forget which year so I will not quote it. From then onwards, we made very conscious steps into training the members of UNAA, with a result that we have not had any part at all in organising the national youth conferences for some years. They do it all themselves. Everything that these two have talked about, they do themselves. They are highly efficient and best trained and they know more about the United Nations than most people in Australia. They are the best weapon I can see in trying to get past these terrible myths about the United Nations in the community.

They are young people talking to young people. I think we have missed the boat trying to talk to a lot of people of older generations, but the young people are interested. They are being widely represented on just about every committee you can think of. I have never known a group so proactive in making sure they are recognised. By their own efforts they get on all the committees. They network. The reason they have got by is because they are using technology so

they do not have a lot of overheads; they use email. They are very effective. Every cent that can be spent on them I think is well worth while. I just wanted to voice my appreciation. Andrew was a very good representative. I have no doubt that Carrie will be an excellent one, too. I am sure you will enjoy seeing how they work within the system. They are very good at lobbying. They are very good at promoting their ideals.

ACTING CHAIR—Thank you. I appreciate you said you only wanted to make a statement, but would you be prepared to answer if the committee members wanted to ask a question?

Mrs Southcott—I would, but our main submission has been presented already by David Purnell and Margaret Reynolds. If there is a question, I would answer it, but it is a very good model and I want to commend the model to you.

Dr SOUTHCOTT—You have talked about the United Nations Youth Association. I wondered if you had anything you would like to add from the United Nations Association itself? As you have said, we heard from the main submission in Canberra. Is there anything you want to add?

Mrs Southcott—I am not sure whether, with the main submission, you asked them any questions about funding—that was referred to by Cathy this morning. The United Nations Association of Australia had reached funding of about $80,000 at the end of the Labor government, and we had a great shock when the government changed and we were told that we were not going to have any funding. We managed to claw it back to $10,000. Unfortunately, even this last time we are really being cut down by the funding body saying the $10,000 ought to be accounted for by project funding. It means that we are finding it hard to run a federal organisation. We have got David Purnell in Canberra who—out of the goodness of his heart, I think—gives us 15 hours a week that we officially pay for. But it has made it very difficult for us to be effective.

We do the best we can, but all of our divisional offices have to run on the generosity of state governments, which are becoming a bit more aware of the importance of United Nations international affairs. But mainly their attitude used to be, 'Well, that should all be funded by the federal government. It's international; that's federal government, so they should do it.' So every state has a different story. They get this much support, no support or in-kind support—something like that. We have been extremely well supported by members of parliament on all sides of politics. We use their facilities, they help us and we have been very grateful. But to do the work that needs to be done as far as educating the community—and we are really there to help the government in their commitment to publicise the workings of the United Nations to all its citizens, and every member government has made that commitment—we try to help and to do the best we can, but obviously we are limited as to what funding we have.

ACTING CHAIR—Obviously I cannot say what is going to be in the report because we do not know yet, but one of the issues that has come out is the ignorance, if you like, in the community about the UN. I would be very surprised if there was not some recommendation in the report about education or disseminating a message about the UN, in that if you are going to do that adequately you have got to have funding. As I say, I am not pre-empting or putting my view of what should be in the report, but I would be a little bit surprised if there was no

mention. But, on another level, if I were you and had near or distant members of the family who were members of parliament, I would be on their doorstep fairly well too.

Mrs Southcott—I try not to take advantage of that.

ACTING CHAIR—Sometimes that is what family is for. There are often disadvantages of having a relative who is a member of parliament, so if there are any advantages you should exploit them.

Mrs Southcott—There is just one thing I have thought of—a perfect example of human rights education. I convene a human rights program for UNAA. We are in the middle of a decade of human rights education; everybody in Australia has said that we have to have education about human rights. We spent an afternoon with DFAT and all the non-government human rights organisations looking at human rights education. We have set up committees; everybody knows what ought to be done; everybody says that it is wonderful; we had all the different departments there and they all supported us, but they all said that all of their funding had been tied or allocated and they could not do it. We got a wonderful letter back from Mr Downer fully supporting the need for human rights education but, unfortunately, there was not any money that went with it. So the problem is that, if you want the community to be informed, it means money. Thank you.

ACTING CHAIR—Thank you, Mrs Southcott. I would also like to thank all those who appeared before the committee today and gave evidence.

Resolved (on motion by **Senator Bourne**, seconded by **Dr Southcott**):

That this committee receive as an exhibit the report tabled by Mrs Southcott.

Resolved (on motion by **Dr Southcott**, seconded by **Senator Bourne**):

That this committee authorises publication of the proof transcript of the evidence given before it at public hearing this day.

Subcommittee adjourned at 1.02 p.m.