

*Mr Yeend*



**PRIME MINISTER**

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**ADDRESS AT A PRIVATE LUNCH FOR DR WALDHEIM**

I would like to welcome Mr Waldheim to Australia. It is 20 years since Australia has been honoured by a visit from the Secretary-General and I hope that it will not be another 20 years until the Secretary-General, present incumbent or his successor - I do not know how long his ambitions go into the future - comes here again.

The Secretary-General's job is obviously a very difficult one. It requires many skills and it requires a broad philosophy. He has to be able to get on with people with many different ideologies and attitudes and with many different approaches to the solution of problems around the world. The Secretary-General has filled the post with great distinction in difficult times. He has emphasised the need for governments to resolve conflicts by discussion and that is something that we would certainly all applaud. It is unfortunate that only too often, governments seem to find other ways of attempting to resolve conflicts. The United Nations has a very real role in showing that there is an alternative way. It involves countries in the world - great or small, in substantially fundamental changes in attitudes. This involves something that cannot be accomplished in five years. It takes long periods.

The world and the United Nations are going through a difficult period and the United Nations is often hampered by great power conflicts. Obviously if the interests of the great powers of

the Soviet Union and the United States are involved, or other major powers, the capacity of the United Nations to act is limited. However, some still believe that power is the only way to resolve problems between nations. The fact that the United Nation's own power is limited, obviously sometimes makes it harder for it to have its view accepted or understood by people who might be involved in disputes. If a great power has an interest in a particular question it has, historically, proved very difficult for the United Nations to move effectively in that particular area.

For the United Nations to work as effectively as many would want would involve some willingness to accept the activities of the United Nations - in particular the decisions or recommendations of the United Nations. I think great powers have often shown no willingness to accept recommendations or decisions if their own interests are affected while the smaller countries might often find that they have no choice. To this extent, there is a difference - a distinction - in what the United Nations can do in relation to the small compared to the large countries of the world. Pre-eminently I believe we should seek to work so that the United Nations does become a more effective influence in the protection of the smaller powers. Some people suggest that events that have occurred in recent years, such as Detente, have resulted in a more peaceful and a more settled world. The events in the Middle East, or Angola, do not really seem, however, to have shown a marked benefit from Detente.

Australia values very much, the role of the United Nations. I believe that we have contributed to its workings, its humanitarian assistance programmes and its funds. We have given support, in material terms, for peace keeping operations. My Government will want to continue this support for the United Nations wholeheartedly. This morning, the Secretary-General mentioned to the Foreign Minister and myself, some areas where he felt that Australia's influence could usefully be applied

in helping to overcome some of the problems that the United Nations faces. We will be willing to accept some of these suggestions from the Secretary-General and that is something I know he will keep in mind. We wish to make a real contribution to the solution of world problems including those in our own region. Although we will be concentrating more in our immediate arena, where there is a possibility of Australia making a contribution in a wider forum we stand ready to do that. We are a rich country in natural resources and I believe that this imposes some international obligations upon us.

We will continue to support the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter. We wish the Secretary-General well in his exacting and sometimes frustrating role. We certainly wish him all the best for the future and are grateful for his coming here for this visit and I would ask you all to join me in the toast to the Secretary-General.