

Working Paper No.1999/2

**AUSTRALIA AND NUCLEAR
ARMS CONTROL AS 'GOOD
INTERNATIONAL CITIZENSHIP'**

Marianne Hanson

Canberra
June 1999

National Library of Australia

Cataloguing-in-Publication Entry

Hanson, Marianne

Australia and Nuclear Arms Control as
'Good International Citizenship'

ISBN 0 7315 3102 7.

1. Nuclear disarmament – Australia. 2. Nuclear arms control – Australia. 3. Australia – Foreign relations. I. Australian National University. Dept. of International Relations. II. Title. (Series: Working paper (Australian National University. Dept. of International Relations); 1998/2).

341.7340994

DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

WORKING PAPERS

The department's working paper series seeks to provide readers with access to current research on international relations. Reflecting the wide range of interest in the department, it will include topics on global international politics and the international political economy, the Asian-Pacific region and issues of concern to Australian foreign policy.

Publication as a 'Working Paper' does not preclude subsequent publication in scholarly journals or books, indeed it may facilitate publication by providing feedback from readers to authors.

Unless otherwise stated, publications of the Department of International Relations are presented without endorsement as contributions to the public record and debate. Authors are responsible for their own analysis and conclusions.

Department of International Relations
Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies
Australian National University
Canberra ACT Australia

ABSTRACT

Good International Citizenship, as applied to Australian foreign policy from the late 1980s to the mid-1990s, incorporated elements of pragmatism as well as idealism, but also required active leadership in the international system. This paper explores this concept and argues that arms control and disarmament initiatives, particularly the Canberra Commission, represented the most effective application of the concept of Good International Citizenship.

AUSTRALIA AND NUCLEAR ARMS CONTROL AS 'GOOD INTERNATIONAL CITIZENSHIP'

*Marianne Hanson*¹

One of the central planks of Australia's foreign policy under the Hawke and Keating Governments was the notion that Australia, as a 'good international citizen', could play a positive and constructive role in the changing climate of post-Cold War politics. In crafting a response to the new international relations agenda, the Labor Governments of the late 1980s and early-mid 1990s were concerned with instilling an explicitly declared sense of principle and morally-informed action into foreign policy, and with the increasing opportunities afforded to middle powers to play a more assertive role in the restructured environment of global politics. This article focuses on Australia's arms control and disarmament diplomacy of the 1990s within the context of what the Labor government claimed was its enactment of good international citizenship (GIC). In particular, it suggests that the Canberra Commission on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, the final—and most novel—disarmament initiative of the Labor Government before it lost power in 1996, was the clearest expression of what Prime Minister Paul Keating and Foreign Affairs Minister Gareth Evans understood good international citizenship to be.²

The structure of this paper will be as follows: firstly, it will discuss the concept of GIC as developed by Evans and others, locating it within the three major strands of international relations theory. This section of the paper adds a layer to the analysis which Evans himself hinted at but which has not been developed greatly in the literature on GIC, namely the importance of active international *leadership* in pursuing GIC objectives. The paper suggests that an understanding of the concept of Australia pursuing foreign policy objectives as a

1 Department of Government, University of Queensland.

2 The specific concept of Good International Citizenship remains an area on which there is relatively little scholarly analysis, although its wider context can be found in the extensive literature on ethics and foreign policy. Specific examinations include Linklater (1992), Goldsworthy (1995), and Lawler (1992 and 1994a). More recently, the GIC concept has been applied, in a revised way, to Britain's 'Third Way' in foreign policy under New Labour (see Wheeler and Dunne 1998), and to the foreign policy of the post-Westphalian political community of the EU (Dunne, Wheeler and Hanson 1999).

good international citizen remains incomplete unless it is located within the broader context of Evans's notion of an activist middle power addressing salient issues, proposing political initiatives and leading the processes of multilateralism. The second section of this paper broadly outlines the arms control diplomacy of the Australian Labor Governments in the 1990s. Finally, as part of the paper's argument that arms control and disarmament initiatives came to be the 'safest' and in many ways the easiest of GIC initiatives to sustain, the third and major section of this paper analyses the Canberra Commission on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons within the theoretical and leadership contexts established and as one of the most successful examples of Australia's Good International Citizenship in practice.

The concept of Good International Citizenship

GIC primarily involved the notion that principled action should be considered an objective of a state's foreign policy. Although most political leaders would claim a degree of moral basis for foreign policy decisions, and earlier Australian governments had implicitly acknowledged the importance of humane principles in their policies, the ethical dimension of Australia's external relations became the site of direct attention and debate following the formal and explicit adoption of the GIC concept into the Australian Government's foreign policy objectives in 1988 and its subsequent incorporation into the overall framework of Australia's foreign policy.³ This move represented the self-conscious adoption of a moral and principled declaratory basis to policy formulation, formally broadening the foreign policy discourse to include GIC as an integral part of the

3 The crucial differences between Gareth Evans's foreign policy program and that of previous foreign ministers were that Evans made explicit mention and a deliberate adoption of GIC as informing the decisions of the Australian Government, and that the changed international structures following the end of the Cold War allowed middle powers to exercise more initiative and innovation than was possible during the more constrained period of bipolarity. These factors suggest that the adoption of GIC represented a sufficiently different approach to foreign policy than had been taken earlier, although it is not to suggest that previous policies were devoid of any degree of moral consideration (on this point see Goldsworthy 1995: 176–8.) Similar wishes to incorporate an explicitly ethical dimension to foreign policy had indeed been considered earlier under Bill Hayden's ministry, but it was not until a heightened role for Australia as an active middle power became evident following the end of the Cold War that such a formal and deliberate nomenclature was adopted. I am grateful to Stuart Harris, former Secretary to the Department of Foreign Affairs, for comments on this point made at a seminar at the ANU on 16 April 1998.

state's actions. By 1991, Gareth Evans had elevated the GIC concept from a recognition of a growing ethic in international politics, to one of Australia's four central foreign policy objectives. In his co-authored book and in subsequent official publications from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, he set down the central place that the concept held in the formulation and implementation of Australia's post-Cold War foreign policy.⁴ For Evans, GIC objectives, like political, strategic and economic objectives, were fundamental to the pursuit of a constructive and intelligent foreign policy. The issues Evans initially associated with GIC (human rights, the environment and development assistance) were central to the way in which he perceived Australia's new diplomatic role in the post-Cold War period, but they did not fit neatly into any existing conceptual paradigm. The concept of Good International Citizenship was thus as much about providing a framework for an important element of Australian diplomacy under Labor as it was about establishing a more overtly ethical dimension to the conduct of international affairs.

In particular, Evans's conceptualisation of GIC related directly to an increasing utilisation of multilateral processes in the conduct of international relations. In his later writings, Evans would point to a set of policy outcomes as demonstrable evidence of Australia's middle power diplomacy as good international citizenship, the most notable of which included the Cambodian Peace Plan of 1990, the agreement on mining in the Antarctic and the Chemical Weapons Convention of 1993 (Evans 1993). (It was considerably later, of course, that other activities such as Australia's role in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review and Extension Conference (NPTREC), its intensified lobbying for a Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty and its convening of the Canberra Commission took place, representing a shift away from earlier concerns and towards arms control and disarmament.) Early critics, however, claimed that the Government's desire to be a Good International Citizen was little more than self-aggrandised posturing with impractical notions of an idealised form of global affairs. Accusations were that it was nothing more than a venture in idealism which, when tested against the harsh reality of an anarchical 'self-help' international system, were found to be wanting. Others pointed to the evidence of *realpolitik* in the conduct of foreign policy,⁵ the implication being that the inconsistency of the application of GIC principles

4 The GIC concept was clearly articulated in Evans and Grant (1995: 40–1). However, Evans had raised the idea as early as 1988 (see Evans 1988).

5 In particular, the Australian government's position on East Timor was heavily criticised as tolerating the widespread violation of human rights.

discredited the entire premise of the viability of an ethic in foreign policy, the very basis on which the GIC concept was built.

Yet the criticisms that GIC was unevenly applied and that the Australian Government failed to take a consistently principled stand in foreign policy may have been overstated. As Evans himself and others have argued, GIC did not imply forfeiting national interests completely for the sake of moral principles, any more than it implied that foreign policy must always be dictated by calculations of self-interest. It was a means of aiming for morally acceptable outcomes while working within the constraints inherent in government.⁶ Indeed, it is possible to locate the notion of GIC within all three of the main international relations conceptual approaches, realism, rationalism and idealism. The GIC concept is not served well by analysing it from one theoretical perspective in isolation; as Lawler (1992), Linklater (1992), Goldsworthy (1995) and Evans (1995) have noted, far from GIC being a purely idealistic venture, it reflected an attempt to blend the pragmatic protection of the state's national interests with policies which were also inherently good and of potential benefit to the wider global community. At first glance, the concept would appear to conform most closely to idealist notions that foreign policy can be altruistic, that states can and do perform acts for the good of a broader international society. Certainly, the fundamental ethical idea that lay at the heart of the GIC concept was the notion that states should be involved in promoting policies within the international system which were inherently valuable and not simply the expression of specific national economic or security interests.

Yet despite the ostensible 'idealism' behind the GIC concept, the realist underpinnings of Good International Citizenship were not difficult to detect. It is generally accepted that realists have traditionally dismissed normative notions of principles and ethical behaviour in international relations. Yet as writers on GIC note, realist considerations were accommodated within the concept: the necessity of managing adversarial relations or destabilising developments and the realist emphasis on what Linklater calls the 'collective responsibility for the maintenance of international order' (Linklater 1992: 28) themselves require restraints on self-interest. And although Evans was (correctly) accused of dealing with realism and idealism in a diluted form (Goldsworthy 1995: 179), it was also true that addressing several issues which constitute what are called new or non-traditional threats to security (for example, refugee flows, pandemic

6 To this end, Evans would respond to critics that Australia continued to make quiet but firm submissions to the Indonesian government on human rights policies, but that any direct intervention to force these rights was out of the question.

diseases, environmental degradation) arguably served the self-interest of the state proposing 'solutions' to such problems. It is quite possible to argue that although they have far lower expectations than do non-realists, realists *also* encourage the ameliorating influence of international law and diplomacy, seek to strengthen the weight of international norms and look to international institutions to address destabilising developments in world politics (see Rosenthal 1995: 323). Continuing in the realist vein, Evans was also quite clear that pursuing good international citizenship was, among other things, about generating diplomatic capital and even economic benefit for Australia. Paradoxically, the concept had been criticised not only as being too idealistic, but also—from different quarters—as being too pragmatic and that the issues pursued under the rubric of GIC were ultimately related to Australia's national interest. The Antarctic Treaty was a case in point. Supporting the moratorium on mining in the Antarctic was an important step in saving a pristine wilderness from commercial activity, but it had other benefits for Australia, including preventing the Antarctic being used for military purposes and avoiding the inevitable resource competition that would come for Australian oil and gas industries from the mining of these resources. There were sufficient 'national interest' reasons for Australia to pursue with some rigour the application of this agreement.

Good international citizenship also incorporated strong elements of the rationalist, or 'international society' school of thought.⁷ Indeed, the rationalist paradigm, which sees the preserving of the society of states and a liberal international order through rules, norms, institutions and regular dialogue between members of this order, was an essential foundation for the GIC concept as Evans envisaged it. In this sense, preventing or resolving developments which could destabilise the international system through a program of GIC, served to reinforce Australia's commitment to maintaining a stable world order (in turn providing a degree of self-interest for Australia). And while the view of international society associated with the work of Martin Wight, Hedley Bull and others (those associated with the 'English School' of International Relations) traditionally saw the major powers as having a special responsibility to uphold the conditions required for a stable international system—what Linklater termed the 'international equivalent of civic obligations to advance the more general good' (Linklater 1992: 29)—structural changes in the international system, together with the growth of multilateralism, made it clear that from the late 1980s, a range of smaller or middle powers had a greater opportunity for

7 In addition to sources on GIC listed, see Lawler (1994b) and Burchill (1991).

contributing to and strengthening the 'rules' of international society. Australia's own good record of participation in international institutions (especially the United Nations), its upholding of international law, and its general history of international cooperation was naturally conducive to the formulation of an explicit program of GIC to sustain these activities and enhance stability in the international system.

Similarly, and as already noted, the idealist element within the concept of good international citizenship was clearly evident. Indeed, it was often the (incorrect) view that GIC wholly entailed moral obligations towards the community of humankind, irrespective of national imperatives, which led critics to dismiss the viability of the concept. Yet while this view overestimated the degree to which altruism informed CIG, the concern to advance issues of justice and social well-being at the global level, to pursue what Hedley Bull, as noted by Evans, referred to as 'purposes beyond ourselves',⁸ was undoubtedly a primary foundation for the concept: leaders must sometimes be willing to place constraints on self-interest and promote instead a more general good. The idealist or cosmopolitan vision of a global community of humankind and decline of the system of states (as a result of the links and bonds forged by such a Kantian-type community) is usually distinguished from the rationalist support for the continuation of an international society of states. Linklater (1992: 35) notes, however, that this sharp differentiation has broken down and concludes that GIC initiatives which reflected a growing 'global moral consensus' on a particular issue (irrespective of the fact that they support the retention of the primacy of the state system) demonstrated sufficient evidence of idealist thinking in international relations. In this sense, for Linklater, and certainly for Evans, identification of the importance of protecting human rights, or the natural environment, for instance, could constitute the idealist or cosmopolitan basis of GIC. There are also indications here of a shift away from a rationalist position supporting inter-*national* order—or what is seen as the pluralist strand of rationalism upholding the continued existence of the state system, regardless of its inequalities—towards a more cosmopolitan view reflective of the solidarist strand of rationalism focusing more on issues of justice and inequality at the global level. This point will have greater relevance in the section which examines Australia's arms control activities and the Canberra Commission.

8 Bull (1973: 148–9) used the term, and Evans (1989: 9–10) repeated this phrase.

Good International Citizenship and the element of leadership.

The analysis of good international citizenship as an amalgam of realist, rationalist and idealist notions in international relations scholarship is, however, only part of the story. Evans's conceptualisation of GIC objectives in Australia's foreign policy was as much about *leadership* in multilateral diplomacy as about providing an ethical basis for the conduct of foreign policy. Under these terms, being a good international citizen was not so much about doing the right thing in international politics; many states, after all, pay their UN dues on time and generally abide by international law. It was also about the opportunities for an activist middle power to provide intellectual, creative and sometimes risk-taking leadership as a contribution to the ever-expanding range of issues confronting states in the 1990s. It appeared from the outset, in Evans's view, that being a good international citizen was about the further application and extension of assertive middle power multilateralism to the issues and concerns confronting the international community which for much of the Cold War period had received inadequate attention in multilateral forums.

This was confirmed and made much more explicit towards the end of Evans's term as Foreign Minister. In his response to criticisms of the GIC concept, he made the point that the expression of GIC multilateralist objectives in Australian foreign policy were 'primarily activist rather than reflective or responsive' (Evans 1995: 193). The distinction is an important one for understanding the motivations and conceptual underpinnings of the GIC initiative as it evolved in Australian foreign policy. Evans agreed that the GIC concept was not divorced from established international relations theory, but central to understanding it, he claimed, was an appreciation of 'the extent to which GIC is about providing international leadership and constructing a better international environment' (ibid.). Rather than merely complying with existing norms and rules, it required in addition, innovative and active diplomatic ventures to progress those norms and rules.

The whole question of post-hegemonic leadership in international affairs has received attention in recent years, particularly in relation to notions of middle power diplomacy. At the broadest level, this attention stemmed from a general consensus regarding the decline of formal hegemonic leadership at the end of the Cold War. Scholars have turned to the question of what forms of leadership would become more crucial in the post-hegemonic, post-Cold War order. This renewed interest in the question of international leadership coincided with, and acted as a catalyst for, assertions of an expanded role for middle powers in contemporary international politics. The early conceptual work on

middle power leadership in post-Cold War politics was led by the work of Oran Young (1991). While not specifically concerned with the role of middle powers *per se*, Young's analysis of leadership in international negotiations nevertheless argued that structural, or hegemonic, power was less important to the outcome of negotiated political settlements and influencing the international agenda than it had been during the Cold War era. Young suggested that leadership was no longer simply a function of hegemony in the international system, and that states which employed a combination of imagination and brokering skills could have a significant influence on political outcomes.⁹ His work on post-hegemonic leadership styles had an important impact on the development of thinking about the expanded diplomatic role of middle powers in international politics in the 1990s. In particular, Cooper, Higgott and Nossal (1993) adopted Young's notion of non-hegemonic leadership as a conceptual foundation for their study on Canadian and Australian middle power diplomacy during the transformation of the international economic and political system in the 1980s and 1990s. Their work was the most comprehensive attempt to apply Young's various categories of leadership to the raft of post-Cold War diplomatic initiatives undertaken by these two prominent middle powers. Raino Malnes (1995) has also developed Young's initial work on leadership and has added to Young's categories an emphasis on what he terms 'directional' leadership, which 'attempts to influence the interests, values and beliefs' of parties involved in particular issues (*ibid*: 105). What Malnes has identified as directional leadership involves the ability to sway participants to a particular course of action by disseminating new ideas about the desirability of certain arrangements and influencing the positions states adopt in multilateral forums.

It is perhaps this last point which has most relevance for Evans's understanding of good international citizenship and middle power diplomacy. As he noted, activism alone in foreign policy circles was a necessary but not sufficient condition of middle power leadership. In the absence of what Evans called 'clout' in the international system, middle powers would need to rely on their intellectual capital for leading states and pursuing outcomes for common agenda problems. In this way, his notion of good international citizenship as middle power leadership in international politics was closely akin to Malnes's

9 This is not to claim that the actual implementation of such negotiated agreements can always proceed without the blessing of hegemonic powers or the presence of structural leadership in the international system. Nevertheless, there have been some important recent developments, including the 1997 Ottawa Convention on Landmines and the July 1998 agreement to establish an International Criminal Court, which testify to the tenacity of lesser powers.

dimension of directional leadership and involved, particularly in arms control initiatives which sought to exercise informed influence over key security players, an attempt to shape the attitudes of other states and construct particular outcomes in the international system. If we take Evans at face value and accept that being a good international citizen was as much about actively promoting a core set of ideas to the international community as it was about merely engaging in the significant debates of the time, this notion of directional leadership becomes more apparent.

Australia's arms control diplomacy as Good International Citizenship

It was arguably Australia's disarmament diplomacy during the 1990s which came to conform most clearly to the Evans version of GIC: propitious for Australian security interests, serving the wider ends of global security, multilateralist in method, reformist in tone and content, and above all, endeavouring to provide a degree of political leadership and problem-solving to one of the key post-Cold War security issues. In many ways, arms control initiatives came to be the most appropriate and logical vehicle for demonstrating Australia's GIC credentials. Whereas human rights, development aid and environmental efforts had been earmarked as original targets for GIC activism, the constraints surrounding easy implementation of these policies became evident over time. As noted, inconsistent application of a thoroughly 'principled' foreign policy, particularly on human rights issues, attracted criticism that claims of GIC were little more than grandstanding, designed to promote a favourable policy image, but which ultimately would not or could not sustain the required moral commitment required of GIC. And while this criticism was not necessarily deserved (especially given Evans's own acknowledgment that GIC would always have to be a blend of what was realistically achievable within the constraints of foreign policy and the search for ideal solutions), it undoubtedly influenced the degree to which the government could claim successful outcomes in these fields. These areas were never discarded as targets for GIC, but increasingly, Labor's foreign policy initiatives—at least those which could safely be upheld as evidence of GIC—came to focus on arms control and disarmament activities, beginning largely with the success of the Chemical Weapons Convention in 1993 and continuing up to the formation of the Canberra Commission in 1995. It was almost as if there was a tacit recognition that this was one area in which GIC initiatives could be applied without risking accusations of 'selling out'.

Focusing on arms control and disarmament carried little risk of bringing serious disadvantages to the Government's foreign policy program. It was an issue which enjoyed bipartisan support in Australia, at least in terms of the general ends envisaged, if not the means to go about achieving these ends. (This was notwithstanding greater willingness on the part of Keating and Evans than the Coalition to loosen Australia's tight affiliation with US arms control objectives, a policy justified in terms of post-Cold War security calculations.) Similarly, pursuing arms control objectives did not imperil Australia's economic and trade relations in the same way that human rights policies towards states like Burma, Indonesia and especially China might have done. Given a significant, if diffuse, public approval of arms control objectives, pursuing this area seemed a logical means of continuing and amplifying the government's GIC program.

Additionally, Australia's record of disarmament diplomacy over the past two decades pointed naturally to a role for Australia in this field, a role which could now be pursued with greater vigour. From the early 1980s, Australia had sought to play a more activist role in disarmament affairs through the Conference on Disarmament (CD),¹⁰ but the 1990s saw heightened expectations for multilateral security agreements on nuclear arms control and disarmament. States which had for much of the Cold War period remained on the sidelines of arms control negotiations became aware of the opportunities that the end of bipolarity offered. Australia had been extremely active in the achievement of the Chemical Weapons Convention, the NPT Extension and Review Conference and in escalating calls for a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. It also, after a hesitant start, led much of the international opposition to the French tests conducted in 1995-96. The momentum provided by these inter-related developments was sufficient for the Labor Government to identify, by 1995, a new climate in international disarmament efforts. Each event gave further weight to the argument that the context of nuclear weapons' utility was fundamentally different from that which had existed during the Cold War years. In order to shift the agenda towards complete elimination, the Australian Government sought to exploit the new climate by commissioning a report from an internationally recognised group of experts. The desired effect would be to publicise the case for elimination to the widest possible audience, at the public and governmental levels, and specifically to present the report for formal

10 Although it had played a valuable role in disarmament negotiations from the time it became a member of the CD in 1979, Australia's more active involvement in disarmament issues can be dated from the appointment of a full-time Geneva-based Ambassador for Disarmament in 1983 (see Evans and Grant 1995: 82-90).

adoption by the United Nations General Assembly, thereby giving it a priority and a standing among governments not otherwise available.

There were a number of additional factors which favoured Australia's sponsoring of this initiative.¹¹ In many ways, Australia's strategic and geographical position, together with its disarmament credentials, made it well-placed to commission a report on nuclear elimination. Importantly, it was a state which had been both a loyal supporter of its nuclear US ally and also a firm advocate of arms control and disarmament through respected multilateral forums, the latter stance gaining it an important degree of respect from the non-nuclear weapon states. It was far enough away, both strategically and psychologically, from the centres of power to distance itself from the nuclear posturings of the Cold War era—a clear advantage in the eyes of smaller and other middle powers and the non-nuclear weapon states—but was nevertheless a committed member of the Western alliance. Moreover, by never seriously pursuing a nuclear weapons capability for itself, Australia could implicitly claim a position of leadership and example to other states, a committed non-proliferator urging non-proliferation and disarmament at the global level.¹²

The Canberra Commission as implementation of active Good International Citizenship

The Canberra Commission on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, the final Keating/Evans disarmament initiative, was announced in October 1995, five months before the Labor Government was removed from power, and sought to lend political and intellectual leadership to the push for disarmament. The Commission brought together a group of seventeen independent specialists on the political, legal and strategic aspects of nuclear weapons. As its name suggests, the Commission was convened to make the case, if it could be made, for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. Following a series of meetings over a ten month period, the consensus among the Commissioners was that continuing assertions of nuclear weapons utility were not viable and that a window of opportunity existed for the nuclear weapons states to undertake complete disarmament. The Report argued that nuclear weapons have no

-
- 11 On the origins of the Commission, see Hanson and Ungerer (1998) and Thakur (1997).
 - 12 Australia's diplomatic efforts during 1995–96 to gain a seat on the UN Security Council may also have played a part in the initiative. The prospect of a higher profile in international forums would have afforded a perfect opportunity to consolidate and reinforce the Commission's findings.

strategic or political utility; this being the case, then the dangers of accidental or 'irrational' use could best be countered by a program of phased elimination, together with a strict monitoring and verification regime. The Commission's Report, published in August 1996 and presented to the new Coalition Government, set out a comprehensive argument as to why nuclear weapons should be eliminated and detailed practical steps which could be taken to achieve this goal. It was presented, although with considerable reluctance, by the new Government to the 51st session of the UN General Assembly.

The Report is an important step in what is currently seen as a respected move towards nuclear weapons' elimination which is set against the background of the end of the Cold War and the attendant change in the context of nuclear weaponry, and which is fuelled by ongoing academic and strategic research. The Canberra Commission is now part of a wide debate urging elimination which includes research from a number of highly prestigious and respected American and other research centres, many of them mainstream organisations whose advocacy of this cause even a decade ago would have been unimaginable. The Report represented a major contribution to this evolving debate on nuclear elimination and stands as a reference point for numerous political and military disarmament analysts.¹³ Individual members of the Canberra Commission have also publicised the Commission's findings and taken the process forward to a wider audience. Taken together, these efforts point to the fact that nuclear weapons elimination has now been seriously incorporated into the arms control agenda.

The Report's analysis of the utility of nuclear weapons is a compelling one. It rebuts the view that nuclear weapons are useful to deter nuclear or conventional attacks, or that they are necessary to counter chemical or biological weapons attacks. The Report recommends phased steps to elimination which involve taking nuclear forces off alert, removing warheads from delivery vehicles, ending the deployment of all non-strategic weapons, ending nuclear testing, phased further reductions in US-Russian arsenals and reciprocal no-first-use agreements. It outlines the case for a ban on weapons-grade fissile material and details the strict verification procedures which must accompany any move

13 The Report has, for instance, become a catalyst for, or been incorporated into several similar studies on nuclear elimination (notably the Stimson Center's 1997 Steering Committee Report, the report of the Committee on International Security and Arms Control of the American National Academy of Scientists, and the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict) and has generated a significant amount of attention. For a detailed examination of the Report's progress and impact since its release, see Hanson and Ungerer (1999).

towards elimination. One of the Report's main arguments was that maintaining the status quo of nuclear apartheid might encourage other states, such as India, Pakistan, Syria, Iraq or North Korea, to develop their own nuclear capabilities if they perceived that the existing nuclear weapons states will not disarm. (Some of these fears have since been realised: India's and Pakistan's decisions to test nuclear devices in May 1998 threaten to unravel the nuclear non-proliferation regime. Both states claimed dissatisfaction with the unwillingness of the existing nuclear weapons states to disarm as justifications for their policy.)

Undoubtedly, the Report put forward a highly ambitious agenda and it remains the case that there is an enormous gulf between the Report's recommendations and the reality of individual governments taking concrete steps in that direction. Indeed, what the Canberra Commission showed was that while each of the strategic, technological or political reasons for maintaining nuclear arsenals are less than tenable in the new strategic climate of the post-Cold War period, what is required for disarmament to occur is a dramatic shift in the thinking of nuclear weapon states' political leaders. The Report concedes that the elimination of nuclear weapons, if it occurs at all, will be a long and difficult process requiring years of work as well as the full commitment of the existing nuclear weapons states.

This paper has already noted how the concept of good international citizenship accommodated elements of all three major strands of international relations theory. It also claimed that for Evans, the added factor of active leadership was essential to an understanding of the Labor Government's implementation of the concept. The Canberra Commission and its findings reflected all these elements vividly: there were clear security and diplomatic benefits to Australia from a program of regulated arms control, stability at the regional and international levels would be enhanced by such moves, global norms on the abhorrence of nuclear warfare would be reinforced, and Australia could seize an opportunity to demonstrate innovative and directional leadership by initiating a response to a pressing global issue.

From a realist or self-interested perspective, a world free of nuclear weapons, together with a well-developed and effective monitoring and verification system, would add a degree of strategic reassurance not present in international relations since the advent of atomic weaponry. Certainly a strong perception remains amongst some military and political leaders that the possession of nuclear weapons deters their use by others, and this continues to be used to justify the retention of nuclear weapons. The Report concedes that this belief may be the only utility that remains for nuclear weapons, but notes

that this utility implies the continued existence of nuclear weapons. Any such utility would disappear if nuclear weapons were eliminated (Canberra Commission 1996: 24). Moreover, a position of zero backed up by strict and well-developed monitoring and verification, as advocated by the Report, presents fewer dangers and risks to security than does the status quo. Particularly if it reduces the risks of proliferation and inadvertent, terrorist or 'irrational' use, a climate of zero is arguably more advantageous to national and international security interests, a primary concern to realist thinkers, than is the continued existence of thousands of nuclear warheads.

There is also the (related) view that a position of zero would represent a very favourable strategic environment for the US. With the United States' undoubted superiority in conventional weaponry and its assured lead in scientific and technological development, the loss of any rivals' nuclear arsenal can only represent a net security gain for the US.¹⁴ Australia too, while never under obvious threat of direct nuclear attack, stands to gain from the elimination of nuclear weapons. Long concerned at the possibility of nuclear proliferation in the region and the consequences of even one additional state in the Asia-Pacific acquiring nuclear weapons, its own strategic position would be undoubtedly enhanced by a zero tolerance of nuclear capabilities. In this sense, despite claims that the Canberra Commission initiative only served to amplify domestic political or idealistic goals, the clear strategic benefits of a program of elimination should not be overlooked.

From a rationalist perspective, Australia's history of disarmament diplomacy has demonstrated a commitment to participation in the processes of negotiation and the formulation and upholding of international rules and norms. Australia remains committed to the maintenance of a stable international system in which the conduct of political, economic and strategic relations can proceed unhindered by threats of systemic disruption. From Australia's perspective, even nuclear proliferation without escalation to conflict would be a serious disruption to the regional and international system. Should North Korea, for instance, achieve a nuclear capability, this would have serious implications for South Korean and Japanese nuclear policy. The decision taken by first India and then Pakistan to declare openly their nuclear status, and, indeed, to use this status as part of a confrontational policy towards each other, has alerted Australia to the dangers of proliferation and possible conflict in the Asian region. At the wider level, Australia has been involved in UN efforts seeking to ensure that Iraq does

14 On this point see Brown (1996), which also examines the realist case for elimination; and Blechman and Fisher (1994-95).

not pose a threat to the international system by acquiring weapons of mass destruction, a recognition that proliferation seriously destabilises the international system. In sum, Australia has been visibly involved in bilateral and multilateral activities which seek to strengthen a liberal international order and reduce the threat which weapons of mass destruction pose to the stability of this order.

In terms of its participation in the international system, Australia, by launching the Canberra Commission, was in a good position to exploit its international reputation for upholding international law and participating in regional and global institutions. Moreover, it could exercise a newly discovered role as a bridge between the Western Alliance and regional non-aligned interests. Particularly after the NPTREC in 1995, in which Australia upheld the views of the existing nuclear weapons states by pushing for indefinite extension, Australia may have felt a degree of obligation to champion the views of many of the non-aligned states (such as Indonesia and Malaysia) which had initially called for only a limited extension, conditional on the nuclear weapons states fulfilling their disarmament pledges given in the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Early writings of Hedley Bull on the links between arms control and the evolution of international society and order become relevant here. While Bull, noted expositor of the rationalist school, had been primarily concerned with upholding international **order**, an essential function of international society, he also recognised—as early as the 1970s—that the major powers had not fulfilled their responsibility to conduct successful arms control measures and limit the proliferation of weapons. This, he noted, had potentially grave implications for the continuance of an international society acceptable to all, especially non-nuclear and non-Western, states (Bull 1987). Bull argued that arms control policies, if they were perpetually seen as treating ‘the security of the two great powers as prior to that of international society as a whole’ (ibid: 197), threatened to exacerbate a ‘revolt’ against an international order seen as unsympathetic to the views of smaller or non-Western states. This was one of the clearest indications from Bull that the rationalist position is not just about supporting the status quo and hegemonic powers in the international system, but rather that it encompasses solidarist or cosmopolitanist possibilities also. Nick Rengger notes that just as Bull warned that there was a danger in the 1970s that arms control processes ‘would increasingly work to support narrow particular interests...rather than the interests of international society as a whole and thus would, over the longer term, undermine and even work against the very purposes’ for which they were designed, so too is such a danger apparent in the 1990s (Rengger 1992: 36). Rengger’s point is that ‘the prospects for arms

control are likely to be enhanced if it is seen as a process aimed at sustaining and strengthening international society' *as a whole* rather than simply entrenching the interests of a few large (nuclear) states (ibid: 51).¹⁵ Noting the cosmopolitanist potential of egalitarian arms control processes, he concludes that they are a vital means of preserving and deepening international society. It seems clear that Keating and Evans also understood the extent to which, particularly after 1995, smaller, middle-sized and non-aligned states were reluctant to maintain a status quo which condoned an exclusive club of nuclear armed states but which continued to deny nuclear capabilities to other states on the basis that this was unnecessary for their own or for international security. The Canberra Commission helped to fulfil a responsibility towards the non-nuclear states to enhance the prospects for disarmament, a process which had been stipulated in the 1968 NPT and reaffirmed in the 1996 ICJ advisory opinion on the legality of nuclear weapons (ICJ 1996) and later the CTBT. If Australia was being perceived by the non-aligned states during the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the NPT as too close to the nuclear powers and as not sufficiently supporting their views, convening the Canberra Commission was a means of correcting this perception and in turn articulating the broader requirements for a more just and stable international society.

Within an idealist framework, the convening of the Canberra Commission represented an explicit belief that foreign policy actions based on principles and norms can be for the greater good. The call for elimination was a recognition of the morally unacceptable nature of weapons of mass destruction and the threat they pose to humanity, an indication that ethical concerns for the rights and well-being of humans across the globe could be a part of policy calculations. Launching the Canberra Commission initiative was a recognition of the strengthening taboo against and increasing scepticism over the utility of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction.¹⁶ In Linklater's formulation, this recognition of a growing consensus on the unacceptability and even illegality of nuclear weapons (at least among large sections of the public and the arms control community) represented the idealist or cosmopolitanist underpinning of the Keating/Evans initiative.

15 The issue of proliferation and its effects on international society has also been explored recently by Butfoy (1998).

16 On the evolution of such normative constraints, see Price and Tannenwald (1996).

The leadership element: the novelty of the Canberra Commission

Yet the Canberra Commission also represented a singularly different kind of disarmament activity for the Labor Government. Like its approaches to arms control in the first half of the 1990s, namely supporting the CWC, the NPT and the CTBT, this initiative also revealed a wish to sustain international order and further humanitarian issues. More than these efforts, however, the Canberra Commission initiative demonstrated the active leadership element of good international citizenship, rather than a merely reflective or responsive position in international relations. It was highly innovative and creative; no other national government had singularly backed and funded any similar initiative. Above all, and in line with Malnes's concept of directional leadership, it involved seizing the initiative and devising a previously untried method of exerting diplomatic influence. The sponsors of the Commission were undoubtedly aware of the obstacles which would stand in the way of elimination; they were nevertheless intent on pursuing a course of action at the international level which would challenge the nuclear status quo and provide new directions for international security discussions. Quite unlike Australia's previous disarmament efforts in the UN, the *method* chosen to promote the elimination of nuclear weapons represented a unique form of disarmament diplomacy. The commissioning of a group of experts signalled a novel move. Certainly, multilateral efforts were not meant to be sidelined by the Canberra Commission initiative. They remain, and are likely to remain the mainstay of Australian disarmament diplomacy. But it was also true that by 1995 Keating and Evans favoured a fresh approach to furthering disarmament. While not in any way diminishing the achievements of the Conference on Disarmament, the decision to set up a group of independent analysts who could prepare a Report which would then be submitted to the UN General Assembly as well as to the Conference on Disarmament, effectively side-stepped many of the time-consuming and bureaucratic difficulties usually encountered in multilateral negotiations. A Report prepared by a group of authoritative and independent experts, including former government ministers, scientists and military personnel, handed to the Australian Government which would then convey it and promote it to the international community would, it was hoped, avoid the sometimes belaboured negotiations of a committee system and have a more timely and pronounced impact than would another multilateral declaration exhorting nuclear disarmament. This method of advocacy accorded well with the government's push for Australia to be seen as an innovative and constructive leader in global security issues, seeking to direct the course of negotiations and influence the thinking of other actors, as well as with Keating's own personal style of engaging in 'big picture' issues and seeking to bring

pragmatic approaches to bear on them. The Report thus stands as an unusual exercise in influencing international relations, while at the same time complementing and reinforcing Australia's more traditional multilateral disarmament advocacy.

Conclusion

Three points emerge from this paper: the first is that GIC, for Evans, was crucially distinguished from other instances of international good behaviour by his requirement of active leadership. The second is that the Canberra Commission initiative, by recognising the growing disjuncture between the policies of the nuclear weapon states and the calls for disarmament by non-nuclear states, can be seen as an attempt by the Australian Government to act as an acceptable 'bridge' between these two groups of states, representing a move from a traditional rationalist base towards a more cosmopolitanist approach to arms control issues sympathetic to the concerns of middle and smaller powers in the international system. The third is that arms control may be seen as the most successful of the Labor Government's GIC policies because of the relative ease with which it could be conducted and upheld. Each of these points raises interesting questions and some of their ramifications are noted below.

This first point suggests the demise of the GIC concept as an underpinning of Australian foreign policy with the election of the Howard Coalition government in March 1996. This is not only because the new Government has failed to promote the Canberra Commission's Report (see Stewart 1997),¹⁷ but because it has visibly renounced what it saw as the activist 'meddling' of the Labor Government and has displayed little of the innovation or intellectual leadership in foreign policy required of a good international citizen as it was originally conceived. Differences emerge between the conceptualisation of 'good international citizenship' developed under the previous Labor Governments, and the more aloof, less activist and less multilateralist foreign policy put forward subsequently by the Coalition. These differences give further weight to the argument here that middle power leadership is most effective when it is actively engaged in the central issues of the time.

17 The new Foreign Minister denied such neglect (see Downer 1997) but it is clear that as the Prime Minister refused to present the Report to the UN himself, sending instead only his Foreign Minister, as he did not seek to have the General Assembly adopt the Report, and as it did not in any way pursue or publicise the Report's contents, the Howard Government has been, at best, ambivalent about its predecessor's initiative.

The second point, to the extent that it indicates a shift away from nuclear policies which unwaveringly supported Australia's alliance interests towards a policy addressing the concerns of non-nuclear states, demonstrated the Labor Government's determination to exploit the structural changes in the international system and seek an active role for Australia as a middle power. Acting as a 'bridge' between the nuclear and non-nuclear states may, however, have run its course in light of the above point on the reluctance of the new government to uphold and further the Canberra Commission's findings. There are serious doubts about the extent to which the successor government will pursue security ideas which diverge significantly from Australia's chief Western ally.

The final point, that it was arms control initiatives which were the most successful of the government's GIC initiatives, raises questions about the limitations of GIC, notwithstanding Evans's claims that it incorporated both pragmatic (national interest) and idealist (humanitarian) elements. If we do accept fully the inclusive nature attributed to GIC by Evans, it becomes possible to assess the GIC program as very successful. When viewed in the context of a policy which admits limitations to idealism for the sake of political or economic constraints, it is possible to claim that Evans and the Labor Governments were relatively successful in pursuing GIC objectives in foreign policy since they were first introduced formally into the agenda. In the longer term, however, this conceptualisation of GIC may be judged as far too broad and allowing of too many possibilities to have any real credibility. If that is the case, then arms control and disarmament initiatives may well be seen as the only successful application of GIC, precisely because its proponents could be consistent on this issue, because they did not stand to lose politically or economically by pursuing such policies and because they enjoyed a broad, or at least unchallenged, support for such policies. Ultimately, our judgement of GIC will be dependent on the extent to which we concede that foreign policy can indeed claim to be informed by moral and ethical global and humanitarian considerations while still retaining the right to uphold and at times even favour a particularly national interest.

References

- Blechman, Barry and Cathleen Fisher, 1994-95. 'Phase Out the Bomb', *Foreign Policy* 97: 79-95.
- Brown, Michael E., 1996. *Phased Nuclear Disarmament and US Defense Policy* (Washington, DC: Occasional Paper No. 30, Henry L. Stimson Center, October).
- Bull, Hedley, 1973. 'Options for Australia', in Gordon McCarthy, ed., *Foreign Policy for Australia: Choices for the Seventies* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson).
- Bull, Hedley, 1987. 'Arms Control and World Order', in Robert O'Neill and David N. Schwartz, eds, *Hedley Bull on Arms Control* (London: Macmillan).
- Burchill, Scott, 1991. *Australia's National Interest in the 1990s* (Melbourne: Occasional Paper 9, Australian Institute of International Affairs).
- Butfoy, Andrew, 1998. 'Is Arms Control Approaching a Dead-End?', *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 52, 3: 293-307.
- Canberra Commission on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, 1996. *Report of the Canberra Commission on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons* (Canberra: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade).
- Cooper, Andrew F., Richard A. Higgott and Kim Richard Nossal, 1993. *Relocating Middle Powers: Australia and Canada in a Changing World Order* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press).
- Downer, Alexander, 1997. 'Dialogue Best Route to Disarmament', *Weekend Australian* (19-20 April: 22).
- Dunne, Tim, Nicholas J. Wheeler and Marianne Hanson, 1999 (forthcoming). 'Good International Citizenship and Post-Westphalian Statecraft'.
- Evans, Gareth, 1988. Address to the Bicentennial Conference, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University, on 6 December.
- Evans, Gareth, 1989. *Making Australian Foreign Policy* (Melbourne: Australian Fabian Society).
- Evans, Gareth, 1993. *Cooperating for Peace: the Global Agenda for the 1990s and Beyond* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin).

- Evans, Gareth, 1995. 'Cooperating with my Critics: a Rejoinder', in Stephanie Lawson, ed., *The New Agenda for Global Security: Cooperating for Peace and Beyond* (St Leonards, NSW: Allen and Unwin in association with Department of International Relations, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, The Australian National University).
- Evans, Gareth and Bruce Grant, 1995. *Australia's Foreign Relations: In the World of the 1990s* 2nd edn (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1st edn 1991).
- Goldsworthy, David, 1995. 'Australia and Good International Citizenship', in Stephanie Lawson, ed., *The New Agenda for Global Security: Cooperating for Peace and Beyond* (St Leonards, NSW: Allen and Unwin in association with Department of International Relations, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, The Australian National University).
- Hanson, Marianne and Carl Ungerer, 1998. 'Promoting an Agenda for Nuclear Weapons' Elimination: The Canberra Commission and Dilemmas of Disarmament', *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 44, 4: 533–51.
- Hanson, Marianne and Carl Ungerer, 1999. 'The Canberra Commission: Paths Followed, Paths Ahead', *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 53, 1: 5–17.
- International Court of Justice, 1996. *Communique*, Advisory opinion on the legality of nuclear weapons, 8 July.
- Lawler, Peter, 1992. 'The Good Citizen Australia?' *Asian Studies Review* 16, 2: 241–50.
- Lawler, Peter, 1994a. 'Constituting the Good State', in Paul James, ed., *Critical Politics: From the Personal to the Global* (Melbourne: Arena Publications).
- Lawler, Peter, 1994b. *'Cooperative Security': Core Assumptions and Presumptions* (Melbourne: Working Paper 10, Centre for International Relations, Monash University).
- Linklater, Andrew, 1992. 'What is a Good International Citizen?' in Paul Keal, ed., *Ethics and Foreign Policy* (Canberra: Allen and Unwin in association with Department of International Relations, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, The Australian National University).
- Malnes, Raino, 1995. "'Leader" and "Entrepreneur" in International Negotiations: a Conceptual Analysis', *European Journal of International Relations* 1, 1: 87–112.

- Price, Richard and Nina Tannenwald, 1996. 'Norms and Deterrence: the Nuclear and Chemical Weapons Taboos', in Peter Katzenstein, ed., *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press).
- Rengger, N.J., 1992. 'Arms Control, International Society and the End of the Cold War', *Arms Control* 13, 1: 32–57.
- Rosenthal, Joel H., 1995. 'Rethinking the Moral Dimensions of Foreign Policy', in Charles Kegley, ed., *Controversies in International Relations Theory: Realism and the Neoliberal Challenge* (New York: St Martin's Press).
- Stewart, Cameron, 1997. 'Ambitious Plan Dies in Silence', *Australian* (17 April: 11).
- Thakur, Ramesh, 1997. 'Defence by Other Means: Australia's Arms Control and Disarmament Diplomacy', paper prepared for the Otago Foreign Policy School, Dunedin, New Zealand (27–30 June).
- Wheeler, Nicholas J. and Tim Dunne, 1998. 'Good International Citizenship: a Third Way for British Foreign Policy', *International Affairs* 74, 4: 847–70.
- Young, Oran, 1991. 'Political Leadership and Regime Formation: on the Development of Institutions in International Society', *International Organization* 45, 3: 281–308.