7 March 2003

## Statement of H.E. Mr. Jan Kavan,
## President of the 57th Session of the General Assembly,
## at the Roundtable on Nationalism, Internationalism and
## Cosmopolitanism at the Deakin University in Melbourne, Australia

Ladies and gentlemen,

I hope that you understand that I am not a philosopher who can use allocated time at this roundtable discussion and present you with a vision of current and future correlation of all these three phenomena. I consider myself to be a practical man, a diplomat having had a great opportunity to serve his country as the Foreign Minister and now to have even a greater honor to serve the international community as the President of the Fifty-seven session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

I will, therefore, try to share with you some of my practical experience and to concentrate particularly on my work at the United Nations. By no means do I expect my report to give you a whole picture of the problems under discussion. Rather, I will try to present you with some recent ideas and developments which are, in my view, closely connected with the question of nationalism, internationalism and cosmopolitanism and which can add some new optics on this important topic.

Let's start with the United Nations asking some questions about this organization. What is the place of this organization in world politics today? What is the effect of the United Nations on the state behavior today? Can we consider this organization on its way towards a cosmopolitan governance of word?

We can also generalize all these questions and simply ask if the state's foreign policy behavior would change if the United Nations were, imagined out of existence?
I doubt that even the most stalwart critic of the United Nations or the most loyal disciple of realism would desire to dismantle the United Nations or defend the idea of a world in which norms do not effect outcomes. The United Nations can be judged effective to the extent that states change their behavior as a consequence of its existence.
Taking into account the most recent example of the USA and Iraq we can say that for the international community it is not only important that the United States or other big powers seek the support of the United Nations but also that Iraq and similar countries fully respect the United Nations' decisions. In short, norms matter for producing a more stable security order, and the United Nations, as an articulator and transmitter of these norms, contributes to peace and security.

In my view one of the most striking features of the post-Cold War period is how even the most powerful states appear to be seeking the United Nations' seal of approval with greater frequency and how many less powerful countries appear to be trying to defy the United Nations' decisions. Although there are many possible explanations for this development, perhaps the most provocative is that a growing cosmopolitanism is causing major powers to seek the United Nations' authorization. Power is increasingly conferred on those who demonstrate adherence to the community's values and norms, and leadership is not only about having military power but also about projecting a moral purpose.

Power and influence, in this respect, are not a function solely of military might and economic wealth but also of perception. In my view, the main cause of current difficult debate in the Security Council on Iraq between the supporters of the United States and its opponents is that the United States underestimated the reality that their power in the international system derives not only from its economic and military might but also from its relationship to the international community's dominant norms.
If a state's influence and power is shaped by its ability to abide by and be identified with these norms, then the norms will have a powerful effect on state behavior. Can you agree with me that behind the huge international protests against the war in Iraq where several million people in more than 600 cities participated were not a reaction on this disaccord between the military power, influence and the dominant norms in the international community?

The state, which derives its authority and legitimacy not only from its citizens but also from the community of states, is embedded in an increasingly dense normative web that constrains its foreign policy in general and its use of military force in particular. While states will continue to act unilaterally when their national interests are at stake, changing the definitions of security, growing interdependence, and expanded community boundaries are causing the military actions of many states to be legitimated not only by their citizens but also by the international community.
From this point of view, we can only welcome that U.S. officials are seeking the United Nations' authority.

In fact, the first significant post-Cold War instance of this phenomenon was Bush's decision in the fall of 1990 to turn to the United Nations to legitimate his forthcoming war against Iraq. While many in the United States criticized him for asking the United Nations to approve an action that they viewed as a prerogative of a great power and a sovereign state (including Kuwait's right to request assistance in its self-defense), it is highly debatable whether or not Congress would have supported Bush's decision to initiate war against Iraq without the United Nations' "stamp of approval". We witnessed a very similar situation last August/September with this US administration.

In general, major powers want to be viewed as acting on behalf of, and in a manner that is consistent with, the norms of the international community - a perception that is increasingly based on UN approval.

This acknowledged search for legitimacy and UN accreditation is also driven by other political considerations. One of them is the fact that prospective coalition partners, however, are increasingly demanding that the United Nations approve the multilateral operation before they will join (look how many European countries prefer the UN approval in case of war against Iraq). In other words, even when the most powerful states search for coalition partners, they are discovering that such partners are demanding that the operation receive accreditation from the United Nations because of its legitimacy function.

Until very recently some people suggested that the United Nations is little more than a "cover" for the great powers and that neither it nor its norms have much effect on state actions. This view can be easily countered. The very decision to seek Security Council approval provides major and minor powers alike with an important opportunity to alter the actions of, and to hold accountable, even the largest members (see later negotiations concerning Iraq in the Security Council). While the most powerful countries have the greatest influence, even the less powerful ones have some say over the outcome (which, of course, gives the organization its collective legitimacy).

The past ten to twelve years demonstrated another important phenomenon in the history of the United Nations - the tendency to use the United Nations as an agent of peace enforcement. This task, however, without the proper conditions on the ground, did immense harm to both the organization and the very people it was supposed to help. Indeed the United Nations' involvement in enforcement activities, particularly in Haiti, Somalia and Bosnia has dangerously eroded its reputation and legitimacy, the prime sources of its ability to encourage states to abide by its norms. There is growing recognition that the United Nations cannot always help others at all times and that to do so can make matters worse and undermine the organization's distinct contribution to international security.

What is particularly instructive here is a diminishing interest in seeing the United Nations involved in peace enforcement; a continuing interest in using the United Nations as a forum for establishing cooperative security arrangements; the attempt to further develop the mechanisms of transparency, including peacekeeping, that encourage states to resolve their conflicts and adopt more cooperative arrangements; a greater recognition that peacekeepers should be used as symbols only when the conditions are ripe and the UN obtains the consent of the parties; and a growing awareness that the United Nations represents a highly valuable forum for articulating the norms of acceptable behavior in the community of states. The United Nations, therefore, can make an important contribution to security even if it never develops robust enforcement capacities.

The UN's influence derives not from power but from the values it represents, its role in helping to set and sustain global norms, its ability to stimulate global concern and action, and the trust inspired by its practical work to improve people's lives. We must build on those strengths, especially by insisting on the importance of the rule of law.

Further strengthening the UN depends on governments and especially on their willingness to work with others - the private sector, non-governmental organizations and multilateral agencies - to find consensus solutions. The UN must act as a catalyst to stimulate action by others. But we

also need to adapt the UN itself, notably by reforming the Security Council and to revitalize the General Assembly so it can work effectively and at the same time enjoy unquestioned legitimacy.

Ladies and gentlemen,

At the end of my report I would like to mention certain fundamental values, which are considered by the United Nations Organization to be essential to international relations in the twenty-first century. These include:

- Freedom. Men and women have the right to live their lives and raise their children in dignity, free from hunger and from the fear of violence, oppression or injustice. Democratic and participatory governance based on the will of the people best assures these rights.

- Equality. No individual and no nation must be denied the opportunity to benefit from development. The equal rights and opportunities of women and men must be assured.

- Solidarity. Global challenges must be managed in a way that distributes the costs and burdens fairly in accordance with basic principles of equity and social justice. Those who suffer or who benefit least deserve help from those who benefit most.

- Tolerance. Human beings must respect one other in all their diversities of belief, culture and language. Differences within and between societies should be neither feared nor repressed, but cherished as a precious asset of humanity. A culture of peace and dialogue among all civilizations should be actively promoted.

- Respect for nature. Prudence must be shown in the management of all living species and natural resources, in accordance with the precepts of sustainable development. Only in this way can the immeasurable riches provided to us by nature be preserved and passed on to our descendants. The current unsustainable patterns of production and consumption must be changed in the interest of our future welfare and that of our descendants.

- Shared responsibility. Responsibility for managing worldwide economic and social development, as well as threats to international peace and security, must be shared among the nations of the world and should be exercised multilaterally. As the most universal and most representative organization in the world, the United Nations must play the central role.

Ladies and gentlemen,

If we need to specify separately key fundamental values of cosmopolitanism, where should they differ according to your point of view? The answer to my view is clear - they will be identical.

If we try to specify separately key fundamental values of internationalism, we will probably agree on the majority of the above- mentioned UN values. However, if we try to specify separately key fundamental values of nationalism, I am not so sure how many responding values we will find.

Thank you.