

## **The United Nations and the Future of Global Governance**

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United Nations commentators usually fall into two camps: groupies and bashers. Neither group espouses a particularly balanced or realistic view of the international organization.

The groupies defend the organization at all cost. Their catchcry is, "My UN, right or wrong." The blame for delay or mistakes is always laid at the feet of the member states, never the secretariat. Serious problems pointed out by critics are waved away, to the long-term detriment of the organization that they think they are protecting.

Bashers, on the other hand, believe that nothing good ever happens in Turtle Bay. They decry talk of a rule-based international order and fixate on the UN's shortcomings.

The truth is that the UN is both flawed and indispensable. It is important because it provides the forum where states come together to discuss mutual problems.

The other reason it matters is that, to a significant extent, the Security Council can confer legitimacy on the use of force, or deny it--which in turn affects the risks and costs of an operation. The UN bashers hate this fact, but the Iraq experience requires them to face it. The Council is the world's preeminent crisis management forum.

Australia is a candidate for an elected seat on the Security Council in 2013-2014. As a medium-sized country located in the Asia-Pacific, we would help make the Council more representative. I have no doubt Australia would contribute positively to the Council's deliberations. Most importantly, Australia has demonstrated a willingness to spend blood and treasure to contribute to international peace and security--in world wars, UN peacekeeping operations, and non-UN missions such as the regional mission in Solomon Islands.

I very much hope that Australia's candidacy is successful so that we may lend our shoulder to the Security Council wheel.