



Hon Gareth Evans QC MP
Member for Holt



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

22 March 1999

Hon Shane Stone MP
G.P.O. Box 559
DARWIN N.T 0801

Dear Shane

A rather belated note, I am afraid of good wishes and condolences on your standing down from the Leadership in the Northern Territory.

As I have often had occasion to remark, politics is a bloody and dangerous trade – an abattoir, in fact – and I guess it is only a matter of time before each one of us suffer that experience.

While we have had significant differences on quite a few domestic issues, you know how much I have applauded your efforts to look outwards to the region during your Chief Ministership, and I think you have much to be proud of in your achievements in this respect.

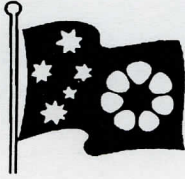
I have also much appreciated over the years your encouragement of my own efforts in foreign policy: they were pretty unusual from your side of politics!

Every best wish for the future. May you have some of the luck you deserve.

With best regards

Yours sincerely

GARETH EVANS



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7 April, 1999

Hon Gareth Evans QC MP
Member for Holt
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Dear Gareth

Thank you for your letter of March 22 and your good wishes.

In many ways I am pleased to be making my way out of parliamentary politics. When I saw you at the Ashes in Sydney, I had already reached a crossroads and had taken the decision that sooner or later I would be on my way. Of course it is now a matter of history that it was to be sooner rather than later.

As I have remarked in many forums, I consider your contribution as Foreign Minister as one of the most outstanding in our nation's history. Your detractors would of course say that I should not be so complimentary.

I have been angered by some of the comments made relating to East Timor. I know that you tried tirelessly with your representations to former President Soeharto and Foreign Minister Alitas to find an acceptable and pragmatic solution to East Timor. You wrote to me confidentially, you may recall, setting out your views at the time. I have always respected the confidentiality of that correspondence and am quite frankly annoyed at the way that you have been misrepresented.

You were at the forefront of the engagement of the Asia Pacific region and notwithstanding that your colleague Paul Keating took much of the credit, you in fact were both the architect and driver of this important initiative that was very much in the national interest.

I believe that history will be very kind to you and vindicate much of the policy and strategy that you put in place.

Now that I am sitting on the backbench I really do wonder what you are doing there. For my part I hope to see out the term, providing not too much sand is kicked in my face and thereafter make my way in the business community. I have no intention of returning to the law, despite the encouragement and urging of some of my former colleagues at the Victorian Bar.

I want to wish you very sincerely, all the very best for the future. I hope that you are looking to other opportunities and won't just sit compliantly on the backbench. I would be very confident your most obvious skills and abilities would be very quickly utilised in the private sector, were you prepared to leave the safety net of the Federal Parliament.

My new contact numbers are as follows:-

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Thank you again for taking the time to write to me.

Yours faithfully



Shane L. Stone

Good luck mate!