

SYNERGETICS

24 May 2023

Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee Department of the Senate
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Canberra ACT 2600

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Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: Defence Legislation Amendment (Naval Nuclear Propulsion) Bill 2023 [Provisions]

I have read the explanatory memorandum in the link below, and noted the following paragraphs:

https://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/download/legislation/ems/r7021_ems_e44551cb-4c03-419b-97a8-bf7eac87cc2a/upload_pdf/JC009620.pdf;fileType=application%2Fpdf

- Para 27. Currently, section 146M provides that the Minister must not approve the taking of an action or a class of actions in accordance with an endorsed policy, plan or program of the action, if the action, or an action in the class of actions, consists of, or involves the construction or operation of, any of the following nuclear installations: a nuclear fuel fabrication plant, a nuclear power plant, an enrichment plant or a reprocessing facility.
- Para 29. The effect of this amendment is to clarify that the Minister is not prevented from approving an action, or a class of actions, in accordance with an endorsed policy, plan or program, if the action, or an action in the class of actions, consists of, or involves the construction or operation of, a naval nuclear propulsion plant related to use in a conventionally armed, nuclear-powered submarine.

My principal concerns are that:

- in the event of a sustained conflict, where there are constraints on movement of materiel's as is common in modern warfare, that Australia may not be able to service and operate its proposed submarines unless it has access to Australian based nuclear fuel fabrication plant, a nuclear power plant, an enrichment plant and a reprocessing facility, and that to clarify that the definition of the "construction or operation of, a naval nuclear propulsion plant related to use in a conventionally armed, nuclear-powered submarine"; and that
- limiting the vessel to a "conventionally armed, nuclear-powered submarine" fails to capture the deterrent value of possessing a nuclear submarine, i.e., it is important to leave open the possibility that our submarines may in fact be nuclear armed and hence should a party attack us with nuclear arms that we may respond in kind.

Don't hesitate to contact me if I can assist further on this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Dave Collins

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