

## **JfP's Submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties Inquiry into Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament**

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Japanese for Peace (JfP) is a Melbourne-based peace group formed in March 2005 in the lead up to the 60th anniversary of the first atomic bombs dropped on civilian populations, which occurred in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. JfP was formed in response to a perceived need to raise awareness about this uniquely, and tragically, Japanese experience as well as about Japan's responsibility for the Second World War.

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's visit to Hiroshima in June last year is a significant step for both countries to strengthen the ties of working together towards nuclear disarmament. Now we see the second step: a new international commission for nuclear disarmament. We very much welcome the recent formation of the International Commission on Nuclear non-proliferation and Disarmament (ICNND). The Commission will encourage various NGOs in both Australia and Japan to effectively promote a nuclear free-world.

The *hibakusha*, or survivors who have lent their gravitas to our movement, have courageously shared their horrific experiences of suffering with us. They continue to stress that the deaths of their families and friends, and their own suffering, must serve as a warning to the world. These survivors always emphasise that nuclear weapons and humankind cannot co-exist.

Interestingly and importantly many of the Japanese war brides who married to Australian soldiers were from Hiroshima prefecture and some of their family members, including parents and siblings had been killed by the bombing. Yet unlike in Japan these women rarely tell their stories here in Australia. Most of them are now Australian citizens. We strongly recommend that these women be asked to

share their stories with the Australian people, particularly with law-makers before it is too late.

With this unique perspective in mind we would like to express our views on nuclear issues in relation to international treaties.

### **1. The use of nuclear weapons is a violation of international law and a crime against humanity.**

Firstly we would like to stress that the above statement should be addressed when reviewing the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and other related treaties. As we note the UN Resolution on the use of nuclear weapons, 1653 (XVI) adopted in 1961, clearly declares: (b) The use of nuclear and thermo-nuclear weapons would exceed even the scope of war and cause indiscriminate suffering and destruction of mankind and civilisation and, as such, is contrary to the rules of international laws and the laws of humanity.

Further in 1996 the International Court of Justice ruled on the legality of nuclear weapons. The Court advised: "...the threat or use of nuclear weapons would generally be contrary to the rules of international law applicable in armed conflict, and in particular the principles and rules of humanitarian law".

Thus the statement is legally based and widely shared by a number of nations. It needs to be recognised by the Nuclear Weapon States and their peoples.

### **2. Australia and Japan should actively cooperate to assist the US to remove its nuclear weapons.**

Both Australia and Japan have been the allies of the US and reside under its nuclear umbrella. Despite the fact that there has been a strong anti-nuclear popular sentiment in Japan and Japan has maintained the 'Three Non-Nuclear Principles': no possession, no production, and no permission for the introduction of nuclear

weapons into Japan since 1971, evidence suggests that the US warships carry nuclear warheads and are stationed in Japanese territories. Nuclear-armed warships around Asia-Pacific region are a grave concern not only near Japan, but also in other regional areas.

Thus we urge the necessity of the nuclear free zones in our region. Further Australian treaties should not allow use of Australian facilities in the US Missile Defence program. We would like to see treaties for the establishment of Nuclear Weapon Free Zone agreed to by the Nuclear Weapon States. We believe that both Australia and Japan can play a leading role in negotiating with the US for such treaties.

The Japan-Australia Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation (2007) was signed by Mr John Howard and Mr Shinzo Abe. The declaration appears to strengthen military cooperation between the two countries and with the US. Although it includes as one of its aims the 'disarmament and counter-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery', it does not explicitly refer to nuclear disarmament. The declaration needs to be reviewed in the light of an increased emphasis on more diplomatic approaches rather than on military defense.

We understand that the existence of the Japanese Self-Defense Forces itself is controversial as long as we maintain and support the Japanese Peace Constitution, Article Nine, which states:

Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes.

In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognised.

### **3. Uranium is a source of the proliferation of nuclear weapons.**

Both Australia and Japan, Australia as an exporter of radioactive uranium, and Japan as the first civilian victims of nuclear warfare as well as an importer of uranium from Australia, have important roles in the international nuclear cycle and with these roles come responsibilities.

We call on the Australian government to establish and, more importantly, properly enforce the most stringent of regulations for both the mining and trading of radioactive materials. In particular we exhort Australia to limit mining output and outlaw trading with states which continue to refuse to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Australia's uranium export treaties need to be thoroughly reviewed and revised because of the limitations of the current 'safeguards' arrangements and the unacceptable risk that Australia's uranium exports could contribute to the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Uranium mining is not cost effective, considering the irreversible contamination of the land where indigenous Australians still reside. We should remember that the Aboriginal people who were affected by the British nuclear testing during the 1950s and 60s have similar sufferings in common with the survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Australia should take the moral leadership on this issue.

#### **4. A Nuclear Weapons Convention should be created.**

To establish concrete limits and thresholds in reducing the numbers of nuclear weapons a Nuclear Weapons Convention is an urgent imperative. We, JfP support the idea of the convention, originally suggested by the Medical Association for the Prevention of War (MAPW). This convention would ensure that Nuclear Weapons States are obliged to eliminate their nuclear weapons within a limited time frame.

We also support the work of Mayors for Peace, who have set the goal of the total abolition of nuclear weapons by 2020.

Finally, we would like to reiterate our commitment the creation of a nuclear free world by globalizing the spirit of Hiroshima and Nagasaki while demanding that Japan must openly and without pettiness acknowledge its past wrongs.

Please let us know if a public hearing will be held. We are very much interested in attending such a hearing.