

## **SUBMISSION TO THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON TREATIES INQUIRY INTO PROPOSED URANIUM SALES TO CHINA**

from Michele Madigan

11-9-06

I oppose uranium sales to China for the reasons outlined below

Uranium is the most deadly substance known on the earth. There has never before been such a widespread instability of regimes with at the same time, so many countries nuclear capable or probably nuclear capable. Nuclear power is the only energy source with a direct and repeatedly demonstrated connection to the productions of Weapons of Mass Destruction. One of the five 'declared' nuclear weapons states - the USA, actually uses a power reactor to produce tritium for use in nuclear weapons.

**It is a complete non argument to assert that Australian uranium won't be used in WMD** because of 'Agreements' that have been signed to that effect. Even in the eighties, this was a spurious and naive argument - and now unfortunately far more so.

\*The IAEA Director General Mohammed El Baredi himself expresses concern that the safeguards system operates on 'a shoe string budget' which he declares 'comparable to a local police department.' The will simply isn't there in the world community, including among the richest states, to put sufficient funds into world's safeguards system for it to have any real effect. The Australian Government unfortunately continues to delude its citizens to the contrary that this is an effective body.

\* The Director himself confesses that the safeguards system itself is 'fairly limited.' It's clear that in Australia we will have really no idea if 'our' uranium is being used for peaceful purposes or not. And in a country the size and population of China how would it be otherwise.

\* In any case, if the Australian Government sells uranium to China at all, this can mean that local Chinese uranium can be freed up for WMD

### **Fuelling the arms trade.**

\*In June 2006, Amnesty International reported that China was supplying conventional arms to Iran, Myanmar, Pakistan and Sudan. And that China was the only major arms exporter not to sign up to any multinational agreements on arms export control. Why would the Australia be thinking of selling uranium to the country which has this present record. in so called 'conventional' arms trade. Why would that be the end of it if we as a Western 'democratic' country are content to sell uranium, why do we think that the world's most populated country far more in need than our own of income would refrain eventually from selling nuclear weapons technology and arms.

\*Would the Australian Government then be selling to any prospective buyer at all regardless of almost certain consequences to the world as we know it.

### **China's active nuclear weapons programme.**

China has refused to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

Let a Chinese general show us clearly what is at stake here in a statement made just last year.

*"If the Americans draw their missiles and position - guided ammunition onto the target zone of China's territory, I think we will have to respond with nuclear weapons. We Chinese will have to prepare ourselves for the destruction of all cities east of Xian. Of course the Americans will have to be prepared that hundreds of cities will be destroyed by the Chinese."*Zhu Chenghu.

Whether it was Australian uranium which was used or whether Australian uranium freed up Chinese uranium to be thus used obviously becomes a completely spurious argument in the increasing likelihood of destruction that the world has not yet seen. At any rate the earth, water and air makes up a fragile boat and we're all in it. Contaminated atmosphere knows no solid boundaries.

### **Conclusion**

It's a very frightening world for young people to be growing up in with leaders like our own Government seriously considering something that carries the almost certain risk of conflagration down the track. And for what possible benefit?

Is it too much to hope that the Standing Committee Members will be able to exert any influence at all in this vital question of - of all things - uranium sales to China. Or are we all simply going through an exercise which will reach an already predetermined foregone conclusion. Let us hope that we're still living in a democracy. Despite sustained media and Government persuasion to the contrary, various 2005 and 2006 polls in Australia show that there is still strong and sustained awareness by the ordinary Australian of the ever present dangers of nuclear escalation which includes an awareness of the dangers of uranium trade in a volatile world.