

## International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament

### Introduction

- 10.1 The Committee's terms of reference ask it to consider how the Parliament and the Committee can contribute to the work of the International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament (ICNND).
- 10.2 As indicated in the beginning of the report, ICNND was announced by the Prime Minister, the Hon Kevin Rudd MP on 9 June 2008 in Japan. The two year mandate of the Commission is to:
- reinvigorate global debate on the need to prevent further spread of nuclear weapons;
  - advance the goal of nuclear disarmament; and
  - strengthen the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).
- 10.3 The Commission seeks to accomplish this through global consensus in the lead up to the 2010 NPT Review Conference and beyond. The Commission will also look at ways in which the non-NPT nuclear capable states might be brought into the global non-proliferation and disarmament system, and examine how to minimise proliferation risks arising from expanded use of civil energy due to climate change and energy security concerns.<sup>1</sup>

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1 Letter from the Hon Kevin Rudd MP, Prime Minister, to Mr Kelvin Thomson MP, Committee Chair, 13 October 2008.

- 10.4 The ICNND, co-chaired by former Australian foreign minister Gareth Evans and former Japanese foreign minister Yoriko Kawaguchi, is made up of 15 Commissioners from around the world. It is expected to issue its final report prior to the 2010 NPT Review Conference.
- 10.5 The ICNND has conducted meetings around the world, including Sydney, Washington and Moscow, with regional meetings in Santiago de Chile and Beijing.
- 10.6 The Committee understand that the ICNND intends to structure its report as an action plan constructed around short (3-4 years), medium (to around 2025) and long term (2025 onwards) objectives. The 2010 NPT Review Conference is one of the immediate term non-proliferation objectives.
- 10.7 The short term issues identified by the ICNND include:
- strengthening the non-proliferation regime, through improved NPT verification and stronger compliance measures;
  - bringing the CTBT into force and negotiating a FMCT; and
  - resolving issues surrounding Iran and North Korea.
- 10.8 In the medium term, the Commission's objective is major advances in disarmament, including a dramatic limitation on the operational deployment of nuclear weapons and no first use commitments by the nuclear armed states. In evidence to the Committee, the Hon Gareth Evans AO QC talked about reaching a 'vantage point' or a 'base camp' for disarmament, whereby:
- ...the number of warheads out there is dramatically limited, not just down to the sort of thousand-plus strategic weapons on each side which the US and Russia are currently talking about but dramatically limited below that...<sup>2</sup>
- 10.9 The longer term objective will be to abolish all weapons. Gareth Evans went on to say:
- But persuading [the nuclear armed states] that they are not sacrificing something in going from there to zero is going to be quite tricky in an environment where you are presumably going to have a continuation of significant conventional arms imbalance, you are going to have anxiety about regional tensions and unresolved problems, ... who is exercising what kinds of
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influence, ... along with the technical verification measures that will make everybody comfortable....<sup>3</sup>

- 10.10 Dr George Perkovich told the Committee that he considered the contribution that ICNND could make is to highlight, in the context of a commitment to eliminating all nuclear weapons:

... what are very concrete, substantial measures of progress that all states can take or contribute to in the relatively near term.<sup>4</sup>

- 10.11 In his view, while the physical elimination of nuclear weapons might take decades, there are a number of actions that could be taken more quickly that do not require a substantially altered political environment.<sup>5</sup>

- 10.12 The Committee believes it is essential to ensure that the ICNND does not suffer the same fate as the Canberra Commission, which, 13 years ago, addressed many of the same disarmament issues that are being dealt with today. The Canberra Commission clearly illustrates the importance of sustained momentum on these issues:

The issue of nuclear weapons is too important and too relevant to all parties and persons, to be treated in such a way.<sup>6</sup>

- 10.13 The Committee also concurs with Mr Allan Behm's argument that 'we need to ensure that we do not allow partisan politics to undermine what is properly a national enterprise'.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, as commented in earlier chapters, there appears to be an opportunity at the present time that has not existed for many years. The Committee urges the Government make every endeavour to utilise this momentum and to build upon its long standing influence in this arena.

- 10.14 One key way in which the Committee sees this can be achieved is through active support for ICNND and the taking up and promotion of its report. For example, Dr Marianne Hanson argued:

While [ICNND] is an excellent project, it is vital that our Prime Minister and others keep these conversations going'.<sup>8</sup>

- 10.15 Dr Hanson also recommended:

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3 Hon Gareth Evans AO QC, *Transcript of Evidence*, 26 February 2009, p. 5.

4 Dr George Perkovich, *Transcript of Evidence*, 14 May 2009, p. 5.

5 Dr George Perkovich, *Transcript of Evidence*, 14 May 2009, p. 5.

6 Dr Marianne Hanson, *Submission No. 79*, p. 3.

7 Mr Allan Behm, *Transcript of Evidence*, 26 March 2009, p. 51.

8 Dr Marianne Hanson, *Transcrip of Evidence*, 26 March 2009, p. 47.

That the Australian Government places all necessary diplomatic and material resources in the way of the ICNND to enable it to achieve its objectives.<sup>9</sup>

- 10.16 The Committee strongly supports advocacy by the Australian Government in support of ICNND.

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### **Recommendation 13**

**The Committee recommends that the Australian Government continue to actively support the work of the International Commission for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament.**

## **Australia's diplomatic capacities**

- 10.17 As noted earlier, ICNND's role is to stimulate global debate. In addition to more actively involving the Parliament, which will be discussed in the next chapter, the Committee considers that Australia can contribute to this debate by refocussing resources upon and building expertise within its diplomatic capabilities.

- 10.18 At a roundtable hearing held by the Committee in Sydney, Mr Rory Medcalf and Mr Allan Behm discussed the loss of expertise and lack of resources in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Mr Medcalf stated in relation to Australia's regular diplomatic and expert capabilities in arms control:

Those capabilities were run down badly over the last decade or more and have not yet received the boost they need. Specialisation needs to be cultivated within [the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade] and other agencies in this field, including the successor generation...<sup>10</sup>

- 10.19 Mr Behm argued:

We must rebuild capacity within the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade ... it really needs a lot more strength in the middle levels of the department because that is actually where

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<sup>9</sup> Dr Marianne Hanson, *Submission No. 79*, p. 3.

<sup>10</sup> Mr Rory Medcalf, *Transcript of Evidence*, 26 March 2009, p. 42.

policy is generated. ... We really do need to retain our specialists in the field of arms control, disarmament ...<sup>11</sup>

- 10.20 Associate Professor Tilman Ruff made a similar point in his submission, describing what he called the ‘substantial erosion of independence, profile, interest, resources and capacity in Australian’s nuclear disarmament diplomacy...’. Other participants also advocated rebuilding Australia’s disarmament diplomacy.<sup>12</sup>
- 10.21 The delegation of the Committee also discussed the loss of expertise in arms control and disarmament in bureaucracies more broadly with the United Kingdom’s Ambassador to the Conference on Disarmament. H.E. Mr John Duncan emphasised the need for countries to rebuild this expertise and to create multidisciplinary teams that include experienced negotiators and people with subject expertise.
- 10.22 The Committee considers that if the Australian Government intends to reposition Australia as a major international contributor to the disarmament and non-proliferation effort, then it must build and reinforce its capacity to contribute to such global efforts.

#### **Recommendation 14**

**The Committee recommends that the Australian Government seeks to build the adequacy and the continuity of the resources allocated to diplomatic and expert capabilities in disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation within the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.**

11 Mr Allan Behm, *Transcript of Evidence*, 26 March 2009, p. 49.

12 International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, *Submission No. 70*, p. 3; Dr Ben Saul, *Submission No. 54*, p. 3.