

Submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties Inquiry
into Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Commission
2009

This submission aims to evaluate the nuclear treaties and the work of the International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and disarmament in terms of the following:
That this Federal Parliamentary Inquiry into nuclear non-proliferation is occurring at a time when two recent surveys (1.) have revealed the following:

A CONSIDERABLE MAJORITY OF AUSTRALIANS DO NOT SUPPORT URANIUM MINING, THE EXPORT OF URANIUM OR THE USE OF NUCLEAR ENERGY IN AUSTRALIA

It is the contention of this submission to point out that a government review of Australian nuclear treaties and uranium export pacts that results in a public legitimization of current uranium exports and the use of nuclear energy, due to 'innovative, strong and effective' sounding safeguards, will soften this solid anti-nuclear/ anti-uranium attitude. It may lead to the majority of the community and industry demanding nuclear energy in Australia.

THE NUCLEAR TREATIES

NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY AND URANIUM EXPORT AGREEMENTS

Labor Party policy is to export uranium to countries committed to non-proliferation. In 2007 the Coalition government signed a uranium export

agreement with Russia. The Labor Party expressed support for the proposed exports to Russia based on this policy of supporting sales to any NPT signatory state.

A recent JSCT Inquiry (Report 94, Sept. 2008) has recommended that the Commonwealth not proceed with the proposed uranium sales with Russia unless strong pre-conditions on key issues were agreed to. The existing China deal also fails this test of compliance.

WHAT ARE THESE PRE-CONDITIONS "SAFEGUARDS"?

The Australian Conservation Foundation and the Medical Association for Prevention of War launched a major report on the limitations of safeguards for the proposed export of Australian uranium to China and India. "AN ILLUSION OF PROTECTION: THE UNAVOIDABLE LIMITATION OF SAFEGUARDS OF NUCLEAR MATERIAL AND THE EXPORT OF URANIUM TO CHINA"

THEIR CONCLUSION WAS THAT AUSTRALIAN EXPORTS CAN DIRECTLY AND INDIRECTLY FUEL THE FIRES OF FUTURE NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND FURTHER REGIONAL INSECURITIES.

The report described how Australian uranium will "disappear off the safeguards radar" on arrival in China at a military controlled uranium conversion facility outside the IAEA's international inspection regime.

INCREASING THE EFFICACY OF THE "SAFEGUARDS"?

If an objective of this inquiry is to bolster up the weak NPT, a description of the Russian attitude to its' NPT disarmament obligations reveals that strengthening it will make no difference - Putin in October '07 claimed that Russia is developing new types of nuclear weapons and described his country's nuclear expansion plans as grandiose and fully realistic.

- **RECOMMENDATION: REJECTION OF URANIUM EXPORT AGREEMENT WITH CHINA SIGNED BY THE HOWARD GOVERNMENT AND NOT TO PROCEED WITH THE PROPOSED URANIUM EXPORT AGREEMENT WITH RUSSIA**

HOW THE COMMITTEE AND THE PARLIAMENT CAN CONTRIBUTE TO THE WORK OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION ON NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION AND DISARMAMENT?

Kevin Rudd's decision to establish the Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Commission seemed to be a timely and vital initiative.

However there is evidence of documents that reveal Australia's involvement in the US led Global Nuclear Energy Partnership (GNEP) A major requirement of GNEP is to demand that developed nations export enriched uranium and nuclear technology to poorer countries - under this plan SPENT FUEL AND NUCLEAR WASTE WOULD BE SENT BACK TO DEVELOPED NATIONS FOR REPROCESSING AND STORAGE IN ORDER TO MINIMISE PROLIFERATION RISKS.

- **RECOMMENDATION: THAT THE GOVERNMENT NOT SUPPORT GNEP WHICH SEES DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AS A NUCLEAR ENERGY MARKET, WILL INCREASE THE WORLD'S SUPPLIES OF WEAPON GRADE PLUTONIUM AND CREATE YET MORE NUCLEAR WASTE**

INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN TO ABOLISH NUCLEAR WEAPONS

A Nuclear Weapons Convention is a proposed treaty to ban nuclear weapons and ensure their elimination. The Australian Government has a great opportunity to champion this initiative before the United Nations to bring about the elimination of nuclear weapons.

Our Labor Government's objective in having a significant role in advocating nuclear disarmament is a task given to a new body, the Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament Commission, headed by Gareth Evans.

- ***RECOMMENDATION: THAT THE COMMISSION PROMOTES AN NWC WHICH WOULD ESTABLISH AN AGENCY TO ENSURE THAT ALL NUCLEAR ARMED COUNTRIES DESTROY THEIR WEAPONS IN STAGES - TO COMPLIMENT NPT AND THE CTBT***

In conclusion, my recommendation is that after the inquiry has conducted it's review of the NPT and examined how the JSCT and Australian Parliament can contribute to the aims of the International Commission on Nuclear non-proliferation the resulting recommendation will be that all Australian uranium export agreements, nuclear co-operation treaties like GNEP are rejected and uranium mines are phased out.

1/ ALP polling 2009: Labor Party pollsters found that 80% of Australians do not support uranium exports.

Australian Conservation Foundation poll 2008 found that the majority of Australians were opposed to the export of Australian uranium to any country for use in a nuclear power plant for electricity generation in countries that possess nuclear power even if they have signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty