



Dissenting Report—Australian Greens

The North West Cape naval communication base attracted controversy and protest during the Cold War due to the role it played as a command control and communications centre for US nuclear submarine warfare against the Soviet Union.

Because North West Cape continues to facilitate, enable and support nuclear armed submarines, offensive attack weapons platforms, thereby legitimizing the retention and deployment of nuclear weapons, the Australian Greens do not believe this treaty should be adopted in its current form.

The Committee has seriously engaged with the question of nuclear weapons in its inquiry and report, noting that the proposed 25 year Agreement may pose a conflicting obligation should nuclear disarmament diplomacy advance within this time frame. However, it has failed to recognise that allowing nuclear weapon states to continue business as usual deters any action towards disarmament.

Significant impediments to the commencement and conclusion of disarmament negotiations are the belief systems that nuclear weapons provide political power and military security. So long as Australia continues lend weight and credence to the idea that nuclear weapons bring security by participating in the US nuclear weapons umbrella and allowing bases on our soil to facilitate the nuclear weapons apparatus, not only is the coherence of our disarmament message and efforts compromised, we are also missing an opportunity to demonstrate that giving a reduced role to nuclear weapons is practically achievable, and need not result in damaged alliances.

Indeed, working together on disarmament and thereby liberating massive fiscal, human and technical resources for investment in human development and sustainability would strengthen the US-Australia alliance as the international community leaves behind nuclear weapon and the dangerous and outdated security paradigms they have come to symbolise.

North West Cape continues to be of concern to environmentalists due to concerns over the possible ecological impact of very low frequency communications given it is located directly adjacent to Ningaloo Reef, Western Australia's precious marine sanctuary.

The Australian Greens note that the National Interest Analysis states that there are a number of issues remaining unresolved regarding the residual worth of assets and environmental issues that include diesel and asbestos contamination. The Committee has brushed these issues aside as reasonable and manageable; however they appear to have not been reasonably managed over the last 10 years and should be conclusively resolved before committing Australia to a 25 year agreement.

Senator Scott Ludlam