

**ATTENTION: Committee Secretary, Joint Standing Committee on Treaties**  
**RE: Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training related to Nuclear Science and Technology**

G'day,

Sorry I'm late to the table; I only stumbled upon this business as I looked around for some clues on another matter for JSCOT.

But I welcome the opportunity to provide comment on the Fifth Agreement to Extend the 1987 Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training related to Nuclear Science and Technology (Bali, 15 April 2011).

I'd like to focus my comments on the "Reasons for Australia to take the proposed treaty action" proposed within the National Interest Analysis on this Agreement.

In particular, I challenge two clauses:

**Paragraph 8** quite rightly notes the significance of the *Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons* (NPT), and identifies significant features of what is the most important international tool towards our shared goal of total global elimination of nuclear weapons.

I welcome this context, but emphatically oppose the illogical conclusion that:

*"Continued membership of the 1987 RCA is one way for Australia to fulfil its undertaking to cooperate with other Parties in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy under the NPT"*

Nothing could be more wrong.

Continuing to reward nations that stand outside the NPT tent with ongoing cooperation in training and R&D in nuclear technology totally devalues the NPT, and communicates that we're willing to engage in and facilitate ongoing nuclear cooperation with nations that continue to turn their backs on this essential instrument. In addition to India and Pakistan, who shirk the NPT, parties to the RCA include nuclear armed China, who have yet to demonstrate a path to disarmament. Clearly there is no evidence that participation in the RCA has encouraged progress among these three nuclear armed states towards the steps and objectives of the NPT.

In fact the thrust of this paragraph is entirely false. Cooperation on nuclear technology in any form with nations that sit outside the treaty, or who fail to meet their obligations under the treaty, is in no way an undertaking of Australia's under the NPT. It is entirely appropriate that we genuinely consider the NPT in the context of this Analysis, however I would expect that such consideration should find that ongoing participation in the RCA is contrary to our shared objectives and responsibilities under the NPT.

On this basis I would recommend against continuing membership of this Regional Cooperative Agreement.

further, I must address the reference in **paragraph 12** to:

*"significant expansion in nuclear power production is underway or under consideration by a number of countries in our region"*

First, I challenge the assertion that a significant expansion is underway in our region.

Secondly, and more significantly, I challenge whether such expansion should be supported.

One significant disincentive to any expansion in nuclear power is the recent Fukushima disaster, that saw multiple nuclear reactors in Japan compromised. Hundreds of thousands of

Japanese people have been displaced by the compounded disasters, and many more - possibly in the realm of a million people - continue to live their lives in dangerously elevated levels of environmental radiation. Following the catastrophic reactor failures, authorities declared 'safe' levels of radiation at 20 times what was permitted before 3/11. Large areas of Fukushima prefecture, including the 3 largest cities, still exhibit radiation readings 5 to 10 times that of the most radioactive locations of uranium-rich Australia. Now, over a year later, nuclear engineers still watch in trepidation for greater certainty that the danger at Fukushima has passed. Medical experts anticipate expect tens of thousands of childhood cancers to emerge over the next five years as a result of the disaster, with far more across the population over this generation. To a world that had perhaps grown complacent about the distant warnings of Chernobyl, this recent human tragedy has given new weight to a global revulsion of an industry capable of such a huge, long reaching 'accident'.

So, In so far as any expansion is underway, I firmly recommend that this is an argument against, not for, Australia's participation in extending this Agreement.

The same paragraph goes on to suggest that:

[non-acceptance] *would diminish Australia's standing in international nuclear arms control fora and our ability to influence international nuclear policy developments in accordance with our national economic and security interests.*

To arms control, I would reiterate my comments regarding paragraph 8: Australia's standing in international nuclear arms control fora is actually diminished by nuclear cooperation with nations that sit outside the NPT, or who fail to demonstrate progress towards disarmament. As to influencing international nuclear power policy in our region, I recommend it's in our primary interests to ensure there are no more Fukushimas.

I thank the committee for the opportunity to highlight these flaws in the Analysis, and I'd welcome any chance to explore the matter further.

Justin Tutty, Darwin