



## Treaties Committee report on sale of uranium to Russia

In its 94<sup>th</sup> report tabled today, the Federal Parliament's Treaties Committee reports on an agreement with the Russian Federation on cooperation in the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. This agreement will, for the first time, allow Australia to provide uranium for use in Russia's nuclear power plants.

Long standing Australian Government policy has only allowed Australian uranium and nuclear material derived from it to be exported to countries with which Australia has concluded a safeguards agreement. The key objective of safeguards agreements is to ensure that no material is ever used for, or diverted to, any military purpose.

Australia's safeguards agreements are designed to complement the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) safeguards system. The Committee heard a range of evidence at its public hearings in Melbourne and Canberra that drew into question the adequacy of the inspections regime for nuclear weapons states such as Russia.

The Committee considered that it is essential that the highest possible standards and safeguards be applied in the supply of Australian uranium for nuclear purposes. The Committee has therefore recommended that ratification of this agreement does not proceed until:

- (a) **Russia's reform process to clearly separate its civilian nuclear and military nuclear facilities is completed and independently verified;**
- (b) **IAEA inspections are implemented for Russian facilities that will handle Australian Obligated Nuclear Materials;**
- (c) **The Government is satisfied that the Russian Federation is complying with its obligations under the *Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)* noting that this treaty is scheduled for review in 2010;**
- (d) **The Government is satisfied that Russia will not subsequently abandon this treaty or other nuclear treaties;**
- (e) **Further consideration is given to the potential ramifications for this agreement of recent political events affecting Russia;**
- (f) **Further consideration is given to Article IX of the Agreements, 'State Secrets', and the Government is confident that this article will not undermine the intent of this agreement;**
- (g) **Further consideration is given to the justification for secrecy of 'Material Unaccounted For'; and**
- (h) **The Australian Government discusses with the United States, United Kingdom, European Union, Canada and Japan, whether the problems of the past in relation to Russian nuclear material being stolen, have now been addressed satisfactorily.**

The Committee has also reiterated a previous Committee recommendation that the Australian Government lobbies the IAEA and the five declared nuclear weapons states under the NPT to make the safeguarding of all conversion facilities mandatory. The Committee also considered that Australian efforts to strengthen the resourcing of the IAEA should be continued.

In its report, the Committee also recommended that binding treaty action be taken in relation to a defence trade cooperation agreement with the United States. This agreement signifies a significant step forward in Australia's long-standing defence cooperation relationship with the United States and will facilitate greater access and sharing of defence equipment, technology, information and services between Australia and the United States. The agreement will also improve the interoperability of the Australian and United States armed forces and open new avenues for industrial cooperation and effective technology sharing.

Report 94 is available on the Committee's website: [www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jsct/reports.htm](http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jsct/reports.htm) or by contacting the Committee Secretariat on (02) 6277 4002.

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