

Medical Association for Prevention of War (Australia)



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Submission 6.1
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MAPW submission to Joint Standing Committee on Treaties, regarding the Agreement between the Government of Australia and the Government of the Russian Federation on Cooperation in the Use of Nuclear Energy for Peaceful Purposes.

Addendum

Recommendation 3 b). [that] Russia ratifies an additional IAEA protocol

Since lodging our submission, MAPW has learnt that Russia ratified an IAEA Additional Protocol in September 2007, and that therefore the above recommendation, and the corresponding text in the submission, is not applicable. We regret this error.

It is worth noting however the information on the Australian Safeguards and Non-Proliferation Office (ASNO) website on this subject. The website, under "FAQs" states "Why doesn't Australia make the IAEA's Additional Protocol on strengthened safeguards a condition of supply to Russia?". (Presumably the website has not been updated since the signing of the protocol.) ASNO states that the purpose of an Additional Protocol in the case of a nuclear weapons state is to help the IAEA detect undeclared activities in non-nuclear weapons states. (Iran would be an example of the latter.)

Of concern is the implication that, had Russia had failed to ratify the additional protocol, this would **not** have prevented the uranium supply agreement.

While Russia's ratification of an Additional Protocol is very pleasing, MAPW's concern with standards required by ASNO remains. It is clear that ASNO does not even require all those measures, such as ratification of an Additional Protocol, that assist the IAEA with its inordinately difficult task of detecting illicit nuclear activities. ASNO implies that this does not matter because the Agreement precludes transfers of AONM to third countries (such as Iran) without Australia's consent. This is deeply worrying. As ASNO freely admits, "nuclear-weapon states have nuclear activities that are not subject to IAEA safeguards". Therefore illicit diversion of AONM to another country (such as Iran) could readily occur from such an unsafeguarded facility.

Ultimately Australia is thus relying not on safeguards, but on the honesty of the Russian Government and of every individual who works in the vast, run down, under-resourced Russian nuclear complex.

Would the Australian Government care to disclose this to the Australian people? One suspects not. It disproves the mantra that safeguards prevent diversion of our uranium to weapons.

