



Public hearing with Gareth Evans from the International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament

Former Australian foreign minister and co-chair of the International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament (ICNND) Mr Gareth Evans AO QC will appear before Federal Parliament's Treaties Committee to open its inquiry into nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament on Thursday 26 February.

On 13 October 2008, the Prime Minister Kevin Rudd asked the Treaties Committee to inquire into and report on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. As part of this inquiry, the Committee is keen to hear from Mr Gareth Evans, who along with Ms Yoriko Kawaguchi of Japan co-chairs the ICNND, which is a joint initiative of the Australian and Japanese Governments.

ICNND aims to reinvigorate international efforts on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, in the context of both the 2010 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference, and beyond.

The Chair of the Treaties Committee Kelvin Thomson (Member for Wills VIC) said "the Committee will be interested to discuss the ICNND's work with Mr Evans, including the Commission's recent exchanges in Washington with members of the new United States Administration and Congress. Of particular interest will be the United States non-proliferation and disarmament policy under President Barack Obama".

Mr Evans said in 2008 that nuclear powers such as India, Pakistan, Israel and North Korea needed to be brought inside a new framework alongside existing signatories to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). He believed any new nuclear disarmament framework would need to remove the perceived discrimination in the treaty between the nuclear haves and have-nots. Signed in 1968, the NPT has 187 signatories, but India, Pakistan and Israel have never signed and North Korea withdrew in 2003. Mr Evans said, "We have to bring in more than the NPT partners - India, Pakistan, Israel, North Korea, all those at present with weapons but outside that framework."

The terms of reference for Treaties Committee inquiry are:

- the international treaties involving Australia which relate to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament;
- how these treaties advance Australia's objectives in this field;
- how the treaties might be made more comprehensive or effective;
- how inter-parliamentary action can assist in strengthening treaty-based aspects of the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime;
- how the Committee and the Parliament can contribute to the work of the International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament.

PUBLIC HEARING

Witness: Mr Gareth Evans AO QC
Start: 10.00 am, Thursday, 26 February 2009
Venue: Committee Room 1R3, 1st floor, Parliament House, Canberra

The hearing will be webcast (audio only) live on: <http://webcast.aph.gov.au/livebroadcasting/>
Further information is available on the Committee's website: www.aph.gov.au/jsct

MEDIA CONTACTS

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