

SUBMISSION REGARDING DRAFT AUSTRALIA-INDIA NUCLEAR COOPERATION AGREEMENT

To: Committee Secretary, Joint Standing Committee on Treaties
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The proposal to sell uranium to India, a country which has not signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty would have to be one of the most irresponsible decisions the current government is seriously contemplating. Irresponsible in the present unstable world situation and particularly in view of the extremely volatile situation between India and the neighbouring Pakistan. It is clear that former high ranking, knowledgeable personnel in both Australia and India are both warning of the dangers of proceeding with this proposed plan which refuses to accept the very probable consequences outlined below. As such it is extremely irresponsible and puts at risk the future generations and indeed the survival of the planet.

So I oppose the draft Australia-India nuclear cooperation agreement for the following more detailed reasons:

The draft agreement is inconsistent with long-standing bipartisan policy of prohibiting uranium exports to countries which have not signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). India continues to expand its nuclear weapons arsenal and its missile capabilities, yet there is no requirement in the draft agreement for India to in any way curb its nuclear weapons program. For example there is no requirement for India to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

The precedent set by nuclear trade with India increases the risk of other countries pulling out of the NPT, building nuclear weapons, and doing so with the expectation that civil nuclear trade would continue given the Indian precedent.

Already, the US-India nuclear agreement has had adverse consequences - legitimising China's nuclear cooperation with Pakistan. Pakistan is well aware of the potential for 'civil' nuclear trade to facilitate an expansion of India's arsenal of nuclear weapons. In 2006, Pakistan's National Command Authority (NCA) declared that: "In view of the fact the [US-India] agreement would enable India to produce a significant quantity of fissile material and nuclear weapons from unsafeguarded nuclear reactors, the NCA expressed firm resolve that our credible minimum deterrence requirements will be met."

The draft agreement has been strongly criticised by John Carlson, the former Director-General of the Australian Safeguards and Non-Proliferation Office.[1] Mr Carlson notes that the draft agreement contains "substantial departures from Australia's current safeguards conditions" which suggest "that Australia may be unable to keep track of what happens to uranium supplied to India."

Mr Carlson notes that the 'administrative arrangement' which will append the nuclear cooperation agreement may be "even more consequential than the agreement itself" as it sets out the working procedures for the agreement. But the administrative arrangement is a work in progress. It would be inappropriate and irresponsible for the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties to endorse the draft agreement until such time as a robust administrative arrangement is in place and has been reviewed by the Committee and has been publicly released.

International Atomic Energy Safeguards inspections in India cover only part of India's 'civil' nuclear program. Inspections are partial and periodic and provide no confidence that ostensibly peaceful nuclear facilities and materials will not be used for weapons production. Information about safeguards in India comes almost entirely from leaked documents. The IAEA provides no country-specific information on the number and nature of safeguards inspections carried out in India.

Even if strict safeguards were in place, uranium sales to India would create an intractable problem: uranium exports freeing up India's domestic reserves for weapons production. K. Subrahmanyam, former head of the India's National Security Advisory Board, has said that: "Given India's uranium ore crunch and the need to build up our minimum credible nuclear deterrent arsenal as fast as possible, it is to India's advantage to categorise as many power reactors as possible as civilian ones to be refuelled by imported uranium and conserve our native uranium fuel for weapons-grade plutonium production."

India's Public Accounts Committee said in a 2013 report that the country's nuclear safety regime is "fraught with grave risks" and that the nuclear regulator is weak and under-resourced. In 2012, India's Auditor-General found that 60% of safety inspections for operating nuclear power plants were either delayed or not undertaken at all.

Claims of significant export revenue from uranium exports to India ignore readily-available facts. According to the World Nuclear Association, India's uranium demand in 2014 will amount to just 913 tonnes – just 1.4% of world demand. If Australia supplies 20% of that demand, uranium export revenue will increase by 3%. Likewise, claims that the nuclear cooperation agreement will indirectly boost bilateral trade by fostering trust and goodwill ignore readily-available facts. Bilateral trade grew from \$3.3 billion at the turn of the century to more than \$20 billion in 2011, despite Australia's ban on uranium exports to India and other countries that have not signed

the NPT. Since the uranium policy was overturned in 2011, bilateral trade has gone backwards and now stands at \$15 billion.

The alleged greenhouse 'benefits' of nuclear trade with India would at most be minuscule and rest on the arbitrary assumption that nuclear power displaces more greenhouse-intensive energy sources. There are much safer ways to help India curb greenhouse emissions than encouraging an expansion of nuclear power. For example, Leonard Weiss, a former staff director of the US Senate Subcommittee on Energy and Nuclear Proliferation, notes that a program of improved energy efficiency could substitute for all the future power output from nuclear reactors currently being planned in India between now and 2020.[2]

Australia should help India develop its massive renewable energy potential [3] rather than supporting India's dangerous, poorly-regulated nuclear power sector and worsening WMD proliferation risks in the process.

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[1] www.foe.org.a/carlson

[2] *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, May/June 2006

[3] www.wwfindia.org/news_facts/?10261