

For the attention of Mr Kelvin Thomson MP
Chair

**Agreement between Australia and the Russian Federation on Cooperation on the Use
of Nuclear Energy for Peaceful Purposes**

Submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties

by Richard Broinowski

Dear Mr Thomson,

Following your invitation of 20 May 2008, I have the following observations/ comments on the Agreement and Summary Page sent to me by email on 26 May by Ms Dorota Cooley. I shall also send this submission by surface mail.

General Observations:

Negotiating an agreement to supply Russia with Australia uranium should be seen in the following political context:

- By reinforcing and extending his control over Russian government, Vladimir Putin has degraded Russia's credentials as a democratic state.
- Russia now maintains a nuclear force of 3,500 nuclear warheads, 549 ICBMs, 192 SLBMs, and 78 intercontinental bombers, much of this arsenal being on hair-trigger alert (source: Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists March/April 2006).
- By building back Russia's nuclear strike capabilities, Putin has matched US aggressiveness under President George W Bush in reinstating the unrestrained role of nuclear weapons as part of Russian war-fighting capacity.

Australian uranium sales to Russia should also be seen in the context of the deterioration of the international nuclear non proliferation regime. Russia, no more than any of the other 'recognised' nuclear weapons states, has shown any inclination to reduce and eventually abolish its nuclear arsenal disarm according to its undertakings under Article VI of the NPT. Continuing failure to do so will reinforce a climate of suspicion among non nuclear weapons states, which are increasingly resentful at the double standards used.

Specific Observations

- Put politely, the Agreement of September 2007 lacks reality. It is presented, or dressed up, as an agreement about peaceful two-way nuclear 'cooperation'. But in truth it is about selling uranium to Russia. ANSTO has nothing to teach Russian scientists about nuclear science, and I imagine there will be little if any nuclear technical cooperation between the Russian Federation and Australia.
- In this context, Articles II and III citing possible 'collaboration' in using nuclear reactors for power production, desalination, 'heat production' (sic), managing spent fuel; or 'cooperation' in establishing joint nuclear ventures, or supplying fuel cycle

services such as conversion or enrichment, are essentially meaningless because none of these activities are likely to occur.

- The agreement includes the doctrine of equivalence (Article XI), and allows toll or programmed enrichment and re-processing. Contrary to assurances in the National Interest Analysis Summary, these concessions weaken to the point of inability Australia's capacity realistically to trace AONM supplied to Russia.
- Such inability is reinforced by Article IX of the Agreement, which asserts that anything classified by Russia as a State Secret shall not be exchanged under the Agreement. Unless I am missing something, Russia could therefore do anything it liked with AONM, including using it in nuclear weapons or transferring it to Iran, and not tell Australia by saying State Secrets were involved.
- I do not detect any provision for Australian inspectors personally to inspect Russian nuclear facilities in which AONM is used, or anything in the Agreement differentiating between Russian nuclear facilities dedicated exclusively for peaceful use and those used for military use.

I note in the **National Interest Analysis**, paragraph 8 and paragraph 13, that Russia is seeking secure, long-term sources of uranium to satisfy its expanding nuclear energy program. I have two observations here:

- The Analysis does not address the question whether Russia's planned two-fold increase in its nuclear energy output by 2020 will do anything to reduce its carbon emissions due to energy generation by coal and other fossil fuels. By what factor will energy produced by fossil fuels be reduced, if at all? Or, as in China, will power generation by fossil fuels also be exponentially expanded?
- Even if Russia uses AONM strictly for energy generation, it will free up other Russian uranium resources for nuclear weapons production. Why is this not a concern to Australian advocates of uranium sales to Russia?

Yours sincerely,

Richard Broinowski

30 May 2008