



AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION SOUTH AFRICA

Remarks by Deputy High Commissioner, Mr Peter Budd Institute of Security Studies Seminar on “Preparing Africa for the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference” Monday 15 March 2010

The report of the International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament reminds us of the destructive power of nuclear weapons. It makes the point that nuclear weapons are the most inhumane weapons ever conceived. They wreak death and destruction as no other weapons do. Inherently indiscriminate in those they kill and maim, and with an impact deadly for decades. They are the only weapons ever invented which have the capacity to wholly destroy life on this planet, and the arsenals currently possessed are able to do this many times over.

There are presently some 23,000 nuclear warheads in existence, with a combined blast capacity equivalent to 150,000 Hiroshima bombs. Of these, nearly half are operationally deployed. The command and control systems employed are vulnerable to mistakes or false alarms, and the potential for terrorists to build or buy nuclear weapons remains real. Without concerted and sustained international efforts to curb them, these risks will only continue to multiply over time.

Maintaining the status quo is not an option.

As the Australian Prime Minister, Mr Rudd, said in his address to the General Assembly in 2009, “One truth remains absolutely clear: the proliferation of nuclear weapons can never make any country more secure”.

This is a global challenge and the Government recognises that the only effective way to address this issue and other global challenges – whether it is climate change, the global financial crisis or nuclear weapons – is through nations working together.

The Australian Government is a determined advocate for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. Australia is resolute in its pursuit of a world free of nuclear weapons.

We have a long and proud history as a staunch supporter of disarmament. We officially enacted our first disarmament measure in 1924 when the Indefatigable class battle-cruiser, the HMAS Australia, was scuttled off the New South Wales coast in accordance with the terms of the Washington Naval Treaty.

Australia is not a nuclear weapon state. Nor are we a member of a powerful bloc like the Group of Eight or the European Union. But we have used our unique position as a middle power, a good international citizen, an Asian-Pacific state and a close ally of the United States to advocate strongly for disarmament and non-proliferation. And we have done so through bilateral, multilateral and plurilateral means and fora.

We have been active in United Nations bodies – we are one of sixty-five members of the Conference on Disarmament and a Governor on the Board of the International Atomic Energy Agency. However, when necessary we have also engaged in plurilateral disarmament and non-proliferation activities that have taken place outside the auspices of the UN. These have included the Mine-ban Convention, the Cluster Munitions Convention, several export control arrangements designed to prevent proliferation, and the Proliferation Security Initiative.

The Australian Government has made priorities of advocating for the earliest possible entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the immediate commencement of negotiations on a verifiable fissile material cut-off treaty.

Australia's strong and consistent support for the CTBT is firmly grounded in the belief that it represents a highly effective means to constrain the increase and modernisation of nuclear weapons.

Thirteen years after the treaty was opened for signature and ratification however, nine of the 44 Annex 2 states, whose ratification is required for its entry into force, have still to ratify.

Australia welcomes President Obama's commitment that the United States "will move forward with ratification of the [Comprehensive] Test Ban Treaty, and work with others to bring the Treaty into force so that nuclear testing is permanently prohibited."

Ratification of the Treaty by the United States would be a profound step towards entry into force.

At the same time, we should not lose sight of the fact that the United States is only one of nine remaining Annex 2, states all of whom bear an equal responsibility to bring about entry into force.

It is imperative that states yet to sign and ratify the treaty do so if we are to succeed in strengthening the non-proliferation regime and take concrete steps towards a world free of nuclear weapons.

Australia continues to call upon those states yet to sign and ratify the treaty to join the growing consensus to enshrine voluntary bans on nuclear weapon testing, as a permanent and legally binding commitment.

A verifiable fissile material cut-off treaty would have both tangible disarmament and non-proliferation benefits. Foremost it would constrain the ability of nuclear weapon states to develop larger arsenals, or reconstitute the hard won disarmament gains of the post-Cold War era. Additionally, it would constrain would-be proliferators from developing the fuel for nuclear weapons.

As one of the six Presidents of the Conference on Disarmament in 2009, Australia was pleased to contribute to the achievement of the Conference's 29 May decision on a program of work. The work program prioritised negotiation of a verifiable FMCT and mandated substantive discussion on the important topics of nuclear disarmament, negative security assurances and the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Disappointingly, that encouraging first step has not yet been built on. The Conference failed to find the consensus it needed to implement its own decision. The international community should be rightly frustrated by this institutionalised inertia.

Australia's on-going commitment to curbing the threat posed by nuclear weapons was demonstrated in September 2008, when Prime Minister Rudd, along with his Japanese counterpart, established the International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament to reinvigorate the nuclear security debate and chart a course back from the brink of nuclear catastrophe. In December 2009, the Commission delivered its final report, entitled *Eliminating Nuclear Threats*, representing the culmination of four full Commission meetings and four regional consultative meetings held in Santiago, Beijing, Cairo and New Delhi.

The Australian Government has welcomed the report as a valuable contribution to achieving a positive outcome at the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference in May 2010.

The report is the work of an independent Commission established by the Australian and Japanese Governments. It was not intended to reflect Australian government policy - or the policy position of any other government. The Commission was intended to stimulate debate and provide forward-looking options and possibilities for consideration.

Nevertheless, Australia has been a justifiably proud co-sponsor of the Commission. Whilst similar programs have been undertaken in the past – for example the Blix Commission, the Canberra Commission, and the Tokyo Forum – there are at least four features which distinguish the Commission's report. The first

is its timeliness. For the first time in a long time on the issue of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament we are riding something of a wave, rather than resisting the tide.

The report's recommendations offer policy makers the tools to capitalise on this window of opportunity in the lead up to the 2010 NPT Review Conference, and beyond.

The second distinguishing feature of the Commission is the representativeness of the group involved and the extensiveness of consultative outreach. Co-chaired by former Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans and former Japanese Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi, the Commission include South Africa's own Frene Noshir Ginwala, former US Secretary of Defence Bill Perry, former NATO head Klaus Nauman, and others such as Brajesh Mishra, one of the fathers of the Indian nuclear bomb. The group represents the full spectrum of views on the issue, and the fact that the Commission's final report was unanimously adopted speaks to its even-handedness.

The third distinctive feature of the report is its comprehensiveness. Where other reports have tended to focus on one particular area of the nuclear debate, the Commission has sought to address equally the three inextricably linked issues of non-proliferation, disarmament, and peaceful uses of nuclear energy. In addition to making clear action oriented recommendations in each of these areas, the Commission has been at pains to provide the detailed analysis necessary for policy makers to interpret and implement these recommendations.

Finally, the report is characterised by a distinct strain of realism in its approach. In contrast to the idealised wish-list of aspirations typically trotted out in such writing, the Commission's report is unflinching in acknowledging the constraints, obstacles, and challenges which stand in the way of a world without nuclear weapons. However, far from allowing the imposing dimensions of the project to obscure the ultimate objective and induce a self-fulfilling defeatist apathy,

the report presents a pragmatic road map for how such impediments might be surmounted and how to move forward in this complex landscape.

Australia is now focused, along with all responsible and concerned states, on the NPT Review Conference, to be held this May in New York.

The outcome of the Review Conference will have serious ramifications for international peace and security. The essential compact of the Treaty – non-nuclear weapon states pledge not to acquire nuclear weapons and nuclear weapon states pledge to eliminate their nuclear arsenals – has come under considerable strain.

The strain was most evident in the failure of the 2005 Review Conference to produce any kind of consensus outcome.

States parties cannot allow the 2010 Review Conference to repeat the failure of 2005. States parties need to approach the Conference with flexible and cooperative attitudes. Member states must be focused on achieving mutually beneficial outcomes for all parties.

Australia's overarching objective for the Review Conference is to secure a strong reaffirmation of the NPT's core principles and of the commitments made under the treaty and at previous Review Conferences, including the Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament adopted at the 1995 Review Conference and the Thirteen Practical Steps agreed at the Review Conference in 2000, while recognising that these may need to be updated in light of changed circumstances.

We will look to achieve balanced outcomes across all three of the NPT's pillars – disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Australia will use the Review Conference to hold nuclear weapon states to their disarmament commitments under Article VI of the Treaty and urge those states to build on the disarmament commitments they have already made.

Australia will also look to the Review Conference to reaffirm the immediate threat nuclear weapons proliferation poses to international peace and security. The NPT's collective security benefits are being undermined by member states that have violated their treaty obligations by developing covert proliferation-sensitive nuclear programmes.

To safeguard all member states' security the Conference must agree: on the importance of enforcing compliance with the NPT's non-proliferation obligations, and of taking actions to ensure that the Treaty violators face consequences for their actions; the need for the IAEA to give credible assurances about the absence of undeclared nuclear activities; and that a Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement, together with an Additional Protocol represents the internationally recognised safeguards standard.

Australia considers that non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament are inextricably linked. Preventing the spread of nuclear weapons creates an environment in which nuclear disarmament can proceed. Equally, progress towards disarmament sends the right message to countries that have chosen not to acquire nuclear arms.

Success at the 2010 Review Conference will depend on the actions of dedicated, responsible and creative middle powers like Australia and South Africa. We can work collectively, and in some instances individually, to exercise a great deal of influence. South Africa has a unique perspective on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, and has actively engaged in the issue in a range of forums. South Africa is the first and only country to construct nuclear weapons and then subsequently abandon its weapons program voluntarily. In 1993, the South African Parliament passed the Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction Act, which committed South Africa to abstain from the development and spread of nuclear weapons. At the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, South Africa played a significant role in mediating between the nonaligned movement and the

nuclear-armed states – building consensus towards adoption of the “Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament” and the indefinite extension of the NPT. South Africa is a party to the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone Treaty, which entered into force last year. South Africa has also been a vocal advocate of the right for all states to develop nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, and an outspoken critic of nuclear-armed states for failing to comply with their disarmament obligations. As a producer, possessor, and trader of nuclear materials and technologies, South Africa is a member of the Nuclear Suppliers Group, and is well placed to strengthen the non-proliferation regime. South Africa has emerged as a champion of global non-proliferation, disarmament and equal access to the peaceful use of nuclear technology. In order for the NPT Review Conference to succeed, and for real progress to be made towards a world without nuclear weapons, it is essential for states such as Australia and South Africa to once again energise the majority of non-nuclear states to drive the agenda forward.

The goal of achieving a world without nuclear weapons represents a generational challenge: the agenda is broad, the obstacles are high, and the road is long. Yet, the stakes could not be higher. Australia looks forward to working closely and collegiately with South Africa to secure our mutual objective of achieving such a world.