

1 October 2007

Mr. Alistair Murray McLean OAM
Australian Ambassador to Japan

Dear Ambassador,

Request to Reconsider Policy Concerning Exports of Uranium to India

We express our appreciation of Australia's efforts for disarmament and non-proliferation. As members of civil society in Japan, including hibakusha, who are working for the abolition of nuclear weapons, we hope Australia will make further progress in its disarmament and non-proliferation diplomacy.

In August the Australian government announced its willingness to export uranium to India if the US-India nuclear agreement is implemented. We are writing to convey our grave doubts and concerns about this announcement.

The announcement represents a change in the policy maintained hitherto by Australia of not exporting uranium to countries which have not joined the Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT). Furthermore, Australia is a party to the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty, which prohibits exports of uranium to countries which are not members of the NPT. Until this announcement, repeated statements by Australia's Foreign Minister and senior officials had acknowledged Australia's responsibility not to export uranium to countries which have not accepted full-scope safeguards on their nuclear facilities.

In spite of this, to export uranium to India, which has not joined the NPT, which conducted nuclear tests, and which continues to develop nuclear weapons, would abrogate this responsibility and risk assisting India's nuclear development. The Australian government has taken the position that there is no problem as long as India concludes a "suitable safeguards agreement" with the International Atomic Energy Agency. However, the safeguards agreement that India is proposing at present is totally inadequate, because it places outside the scope of safeguards facilities that can be used for the development of nuclear weapons.

We believe that, above all, priority should be placed on India freezing its nuclear weapons development. Specifically, India should end the production of fissile material and sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). To talk about allowing uranium exports, or any other type of nuclear cooperation, before these conditions have been met is to risk inflicting great damage on the international non-proliferation system.

Grave doubts and concerns about this issue have been expressed by civil society, not just in Japan and Australia, but throughout the world. We call on all members of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), including Australia and Japan, not to permit nuclear cooperation with India, which has not accepted full-scope safeguards.

We strongly request Australia, as a leading country in world efforts for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, to reconsider its policy concerning nuclear cooperation with India.

Signatories

Nori Tohei (Co-Chairperson, Japan Confederation of A- and H-Bomb Sufferers' Organizations (Hidankyo))

Terumi Tanaka (Secretary General, Japan Confederation of A- and H-Bomb Sufferers' Organizations (Hidankyo))

Shoji Sawada (Emeritus Professor of Nagoya University, Representative Director of Japan Council Against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs (GENSUIKYO))

Hideo Tsuchiyama (Director, Nagasaki Global Citizens' Assembly for the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons)

Shingo Fukuyama (Secretary General, Japan Congress against A-and H-Bombs (GENSUIKIN))

Hiromichi Umebayashi (President, Peace Depot)

Keiko Nakamura (Peace Depot)

Ken'ichi Okubo (Secretary General, Japan Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms)

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Masayoshi Naito (Coordinator, Citizens Network for Nuclear Weapons Abolition)

Mayako Ishii (President, Young Women's Christian Association of Japan)

Kuniyo Kawabata (General Secretary, Young Women's Christian Association of Japan)

Eiko Kataoka (Women's Democratic Club)

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Jun Hoshikawa (Executive Director, Greenpeace Japan)

Hideyuki Ban (Co-Director, Citizens' Nuclear Information Center)