

A large, fiery mushroom cloud from a nuclear explosion dominates the center of the image. The cloud is bright orange and yellow at its base, transitioning to a darker, more ashy brown at the top. It rises from a dark, flat landscape under a clear blue sky. The overall scene is dramatic and serves as a backdrop for the text.

DISARMAMENT DOUBLE- SPEAK

AUSTRALIA'S RECORD ON NUCLEAR WEAPONS

“War makes me scared. War is scary. But war with nuclear bombs would be even scarier – just thinking about it makes me shiver. No one would be safe in nuclear war. Those nuclear bombs are no good. We gotta make sure nobody uses them, and we gotta support anyone who’s trying to stop them.”

– Yami Lester, a Yankunytjatjara man who was covered in a cloud of radioactive fallout from British nuclear testing in Australia in 1953



FOREWORD

Australia should end its double-speak on nuclear disarmament, and lead the push for negotiations on a treaty banning and eliminating nuclear weapons.

Australia has made important contributions towards a safer and more peaceful world – such as helping found the UN, helping establish the Chemical Weapons Convention, and opposing nuclear test explosions, after itself being contaminated by British tests. However, Australians should be profoundly concerned that our government is today doing more to increase the dangers of nuclear weapons being used than it is helping to ban them. Its professed support for nuclear disarmament is contradicted by its actions. We claim the protection of US nuclear weapons, despite there being no

agreement or treaty giving the concept of “extended nuclear deterrence” any credibility. We support continued investments in US nuclear weapons and willingness to use them, despite this making us a nuclear target.

We are dramatically ramping up Australia as a subservient US military base, with growing spy, surveillance and communications facilities; increasing military exercising; US troops on permanent rotation; plans for drones based on the Cocos Islands; and possibly a US aircraft carrier taskforce in Fremantle. We are accomplices to a hazardous and provocative US policy of con-

tainment of China which risks a new cold war. We, our children and the world deserve better.

Australia should, as New Zealand has done, ensure that nuclear weapons have no place in our military alliances, and that no facilities on our soil and no Australians ever take part in their use. We should use our position on the UN Security Council to help lead the push for negotiations on a treaty to prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons.

A world freed from nuclear weapons would be more readily achieved and sustained if we ended uranium exports to nuclear weapon states, to states that

have not signed on to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and to states with inadequate safeguards.

Nuclear weapons can only jeopardise, not safeguard, one’s security. Their elimination is the most urgent global priority. It is time Australia ended its double-speak on nuclear disarmament and did much more.

Rt Hon Malcolm Fraser AC CH
May 2013



A MIXED HISTORY

Australia's early ambitions to acquire an atomic arsenal ended when it joined the Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1973. But it has not yet become a strong and consistent supporter of nuclear disarmament.

Early in the nuclear weapons era, Australian governments were keen for Australia to develop a nuclear weapons capability. During the 1950s, prime minister Robert Menzies attempted unsuccessfully to acquire nuclear technology from Britain and the US, and then to buy British nuclear weapons.

NUCLEAR TESTING

Without consulting his Cabinet, Menzies also agreed to have British nuclear tests conducted in Australia. Twelve major tests were carried out from 1952 to 1957 at Maralinga, Emu Field and Montebello Islands. Almost

600 “minor trials” up to 1963 dispersed 24.4 kg of plutonium in some 50,000 fragments, beryllium and 8 tonnes of uranium. Very little was done to protect the Aboriginal people in the area or the test site workers.

NUCLEAR WEAPONS TIMELINE: AUSTRALIA

- 1952** Britain conducts its first nuclear test, on Montebello Islands, WA
- 1953** Britain begins testing on the Australian mainland, at Emu Field, SA
- 1956** Britain commences a series of nuclear tests at Maralinga, SA
- 1973** Whitlam government ratifies Non-Proliferation Treaty
- 1996** Canberra Commission issues landmark report on disarmament
- 1998** Howard government ratifies Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty
- 2000** Partial remediation of Maralinga test site concludes
- 2008** Australia and Japan set up international disarmament commission

NUCLEAR POWER/WEAPONS

In 1968 prime minister John Gorton endeavoured to keep Australia's nuclear weapons options open when he ordered the construction of a nuclear power station on Commonwealth land

at Jervis Bay in New South Wales. The site where construction work began is still visible.

However, in 1968 the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) was opened for signature, and Gorton very reluctantly signed. The Jervis Bay project was terminated largely on economic grounds, and prime minister Gough Whitlam ratified the NPT in 1973. Since then, Australia has been a strong supporter of the NPT's non-proliferation agenda, but a weak advocate of its equally important Article VI disarmament obligation because of its reliance on US extended nuclear deterrence.

“The work of the International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament is important ... [but] our desire to support its goals must be balanced against our strategic interest in ensuring stability through ensuring a credible US extended deterrence.”

– Australia’s submission to the US Nuclear Posture Review, 2009

EXPORTING URANIUM

The issue of uranium mining and exports became prominent during the 1970s as a major challenge to Australia’s nuclear non-proliferation credentials. Many argued, with sound evidence, that Australia could not guarantee that its uranium would be kept out of weapons. This argument remains valid today.

Despite Australia’s earlier support for nuclear testing, it signed the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty in 1996 and ratified it in 1998. Although it professes strong support for the treaty, it allows uranium sales to nations that have not joined it.



Atomic blast: The crew of the HMS *Narvik* watch the smoke rise after a British atomic test on the Montebello Islands, 1956.

DISARMAMENT DIPLOMACY

In 1996 Australia made a significant contribution to global disarmament efforts with the report of the Canberra Commission on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, set up by prime minister Paul Keating. It demonstrated the necessity and feasibility of complete nuclear disarmament. However, with the election of the Howard government, it was quickly buried.

In 2008 prime minister Kevin Rudd established the International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, with Japan as a co-sponsor. While the commission failed

to critique the role that the civil nuclear industry continues to play in weapons proliferation, its recommendations warrant far more serious attention than they have received. The government did not follow up the commission’s report at the UN or in other forums, and its response took the form of a press release.

Despite Australia’s currently good record as an avowed non-nuclear weapons state, it cannot be assumed that this status will never be challenged again. Disturbingly, several senior commentators in recent years have again urged that Australia keep its nuclear options open.

Time for a ban: Some of the prominent Australians who have appealed to the prime minister to support a ban on nuclear weapons.

APPEAL TO THE PRIME MINISTER

“There is a growing consensus among world leaders on the urgent need to abolish nuclear weapons. The increasing risks of nuclear weapons proliferation and use in our region and beyond mean there has never been a more important time for Australian initiative and leadership in global efforts to free the world from nuclear weapons.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has urged governments to negotiate a convention to outlaw nuclear weapons and provide for their elimination within an agreed timeframe. We, the undersigned recipients of the Order of Australia, call upon the Australian government to adopt a nuclear-weapon-free defence posture and to join other nations in working to achieve a comprehensive, verifiable treaty to abolish nuclear weapons.”

A statement signed by 800 recipients of the Order of Australia – the nation’s highest civilian honour – and delivered to the prime minister in 2012



RESISTING A BAN

In international forums, Australia has resisted calls by civil society to join the vast majority of nations in supporting negotiations on a treaty to outlaw and eliminate nuclear weapons.

Australian governments have generally been strong proponents of horizontal nuclear non-proliferation (stopping nuclear weapons from spreading to other countries), but skilled at avoiding the issue of nuclear disarmament (getting rid of existing weapons). Rhetoric has centred on what other nations must do or not do and has ignored the enormous responsibility Australia has by virtue of its ties with nuclear-armed states. The word “ultimate” repeatedly slips into government pronouncements about nuclear weapons elimination, consigning the task to eternity or at least

to a time and circumstances unspecified. For example, the 2009 defence white paper stated that “stable nuclear deterrence will continue to be a feature of the international system for the foreseeable future”.



AGAINST THE TIDE

While more than 140 nations support the goal of a treaty banning nuclear weapons, Australia is not among them. This is despite high-level advocacy for such a step from many Australians. Nearly 800 recipients of the Order of Australia – including former prime ministers, governors-general, foreign affairs and defence ministers, premiers, governors, High Court justices and chiefs of the armed forces – have called on the government to adopt a nuclear-weapon-free defence posture and work for a nuclear weapons convention. An opinion poll has shown that

more than 90 per cent of Australians support a ban.

In September 2009, the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties, reporting on Australia’s nuclear treaties and how parliament could strengthen non-proliferation and disarmament, recommended that the government make clear in international forums its support for a nuclear weapons convention, and that the parliament adopt a resolution on its commitment to the abolition of nuclear weapons. A parliamentary resolution was adopted in 2012, but Australia continues to vote against a nuclear weapons ban at the UN.

“Australia’s most enduring contribution to the US nuclear force posture has been through our partnerships in the Joint Defence Facility Nurrungar and the Joint Defence Facility Pine Gap.”

– Dennis Richardson, Australian Ambassador to the US, in a closed US congressional session, 2009

RELiance ON US NUCLEAR FORCES

“For so long as nuclear weapons exist, Australia is likely to rely on the nuclear forces of the US to deter nuclear attack on Australia. Australian defence policy under successive governments has acknowledged the value to Australia of the protection afforded by extended nuclear deterrence under the US alliance. That protection provides a stable and reliable sense of assurance and has over the years removed the need for Australia to consider more significant and expensive defence options.”

Australia’s submission to the US Nuclear Posture Review of 2009, obtained by ICAN through freedom of information laws



Nuclear targeting: The Joint Defence Facility Pine Gap, Central Australia. Source: Google Earth

RELYING ON THE BOMB

Australia's reluctance to support a global ban on nuclear weapons owes largely to its continued reliance on – and support for – US extended nuclear deterrence.

The reason for Australia's verbal gymnastics over whether or not we want to get rid of the bomb is clear: over the past two decades, successive defence white papers have reiterated Australia's reliance on US extended nuclear deterrence in the face of nuclear threats.

Despite the fact that there has never been a public US assurance of such nuclear protection – and despite grave concerns that nuclear deterrence undermines security for us all, in any case – this has been presented as an article of faith, a self-evident truth that requires no serious examination.

UNCRITICAL SUPPORT

Australia's support for the US nuclear posture as providing both "stable deterrence" globally and extended deterrence protection regionally is bolstered by hosting US intelligence and military facilities vital to US nuclear war operations.

The Joint Defence Facility Pine Gap in Central Australia is a key part of US systems of missile early warning, missile defence and nuclear targeting. The Australian government has acknowledged that for these reasons Pine Gap would be a high priority target in a major war between the US and China.



Unlike New Zealand, Australia has never questioned or prevented the visits to our ports of US nuclear-armed warships. Australia's reliance on nuclear weapons extends even further, and includes active encouragement of the US to make more explicit its willingness to use these weapons in our defence.

Government officials have suggested that without the US "nuclear umbrella" we might need to consider developing our own nuclear weapons. In view of Australia's condemnation of countries such as Iran, this is hypocrisy writ large. Our support for both nuclear deterrence and missile defence presents further inconsistency. If deterrence works, then a missile shield is surely superfluous because a nuclear attack will not occur. A one-sided missile defence program is also very provocative and leads the other side to expand and upgrade its nuclear forces as part of a vicious circle.

FUELLING THE BOMB

Recipients of Australian uranium include most of the nuclear-armed nations. Safeguards offer only the illusion of protection against the diversion of our uranium to nuclear weapons.

Australia exports uranium to, among others, all of the nuclear-weapon states that are party to the NPT – Russia, the US, France, Britain and China – while repeating the decades-old myth that safeguards keep our uranium out of weapons.

Safeguards inspections are administered by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which also has the role of promoting nuclear power. The above five nations are subject to minimal if any inspections. Even if frequent inspections occurred at all nuclear facilities around the world, it takes only 3–5 kilograms of plu-

tonium, or 20 kilograms or less of highly enriched uranium, to make a nuclear weapon. Nuclear accounting discrepancies make it extremely difficult to detect the diversion of such small amounts.

The Australian Safeguards and Non-Proliferation Office within the foreign ministry essentially conducts annual retrospective bookkeeping regarding the fate of Australian uranium. It adds no significant verification, monitoring or enforcement capabilities to the voluntary and weak safeguards of the IAEA. If uranium sales to India proceed, they are certain to add to the already intricate links between

nuclear power and nuclear weapons that make the task of disarmament infinitely harder.

BANNING FISSILE MATERIALS

Australia has supported a treaty to cease production of further

fiissile material (fuel) for nuclear weapons. However, such a treaty would leave untouched existing stockpiles, favouring those nuclear-armed nations that possess large reserves of fissile materials.



Uranium: The Ranger uranium mine in the Northern Territory.

FUNDING THE BOMB

Many Australian financial institutions, as well as the government-owned Future Fund, invest in foreign companies that manufacture, maintain and modernise nuclear arsenals.

Nuclear-armed nations spend more than US\$100 billion each year on their nuclear arsenals – assembling new warheads, modernising old ones, and building ballistic missiles, bombers and submarines to launch them. Much of this work is undertaken by private corporations.

By lending money to these corporations, and purchasing their shares and bonds, financial institutions worldwide, including in Australia, support the nuclear arms industry. In March 2012 ICAN released the first ever global report on investments in nuclear weapons producers, *Don't Bank on the Bomb*. It identi-

fied more than 300 banks, pension funds, insurance companies and asset managers in 30 countries with substantial investments in nuclear weapons producers. In Australia, they include ANZ, the Commonwealth Bank, Macquarie Group, Platinum Asset Management and Westpac.

THE FUTURE FUND

In May 2011 ICAN learned that the Future Fund – which invests Australian taxpayers' funds – has holdings worth A\$135 million in 15 nuclear weapons producers, even though it has, to its credit, divested from producers of landmines and cluster munitions.



MAJOR PRODUCERS OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Companies heavily involved in the production and modernisation of nuclear arsenals:

Company	Country
Alliant Techsystems	US
Babcock & Wilcox	US
Babcock International	UK
BAE Systems	UK
Boeing	US
General Dynamics	US
Honeywell International	US
Jacobs Engineering	US
Lockheed Martin	US
Northrop Grumman	US
Rolls-Royce	UK
Safran	France
Serco Group	UK
Thales	France

DUCK AND COVER?

**Australia's support for nuclear deterrence places us at risk of nuclear attack.
No effective humanitarian response would be possible in the event of such a disaster.**

During the 1980s the Australian government published a booklet titled *Nuclear Weapons: Their effects and your protection*, drawing on similar publications in Britain and the US, and eerily reminiscent of the US school-children's drill in ducking under the desk when the bomb hits.

The purpose of the booklet was to dispel what it called “the more hysterical or exaggerated notions held by many people” and to inform Australians that keeping an underground shelter well stocked (right down to clean underwear for the children), or hiding under the stairs at the critical moment, would



help them survive. Contrary to everything that was known at the time, the booklet declared, “There would be very substantial help to the injured, the homeless, or orphaned.”

If nuclear weapons are used again – which depends solely on our success in abolishing them – there will be tens or hundreds of thousands of deaths from each bomb used, and a far greater number injured with severe burns, multiple fractures, blast and crush injuries, mutilation from flying glass and other debris, followed by infections and radiation sickness. Medical and emergency services will be all

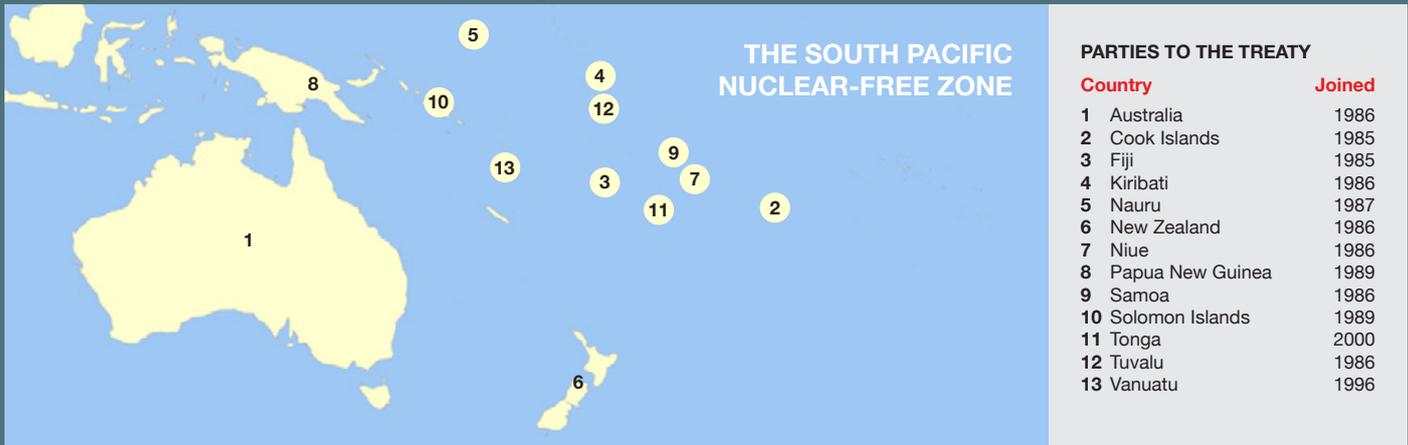
but destroyed, as will power and water supplies and transport and communications.

AN INCREASED RISK

Australia's support for nuclear deterrence places us at risk of nuclear attack, whether it be on a city or a facility such as Pine Gap near Alice Springs. Despite this risk, the propaganda of the 1980s has been replaced by silence. There is no official public acknowledgement of the effects of a nuclear attack on Australia, and the Australian people have never been informed by the government, let alone consulted, about this risk.

“Australia is obligated under the Treaty of Rarotonga to not provide India with nuclear materials until such time as India has concluded a full-scope safeguards agreement.”

– Donald Rothwell, Professor of International Law, Australian National University



Australia is one of 13 nations that comprise the South Pacific Nuclear-Free Zone. The zone was created under the Treaty of Rarotonga, which came into effect in 1986. The treaty prohibits nuclear explosive devices in the South Pacific and bans the test-

ing and use of nuclear explosive technologies. Other treaty obligations include not assisting or encouraging the manufacture or acquisition of any nuclear weapon by any country; not providing fissionable materials to any country unless subject to

full-scope safeguards with the International Atomic Energy Agency (which would not be the case for Australia’s proposed uranium exports to India); and preventing the stationing of any nuclear weapon anywhere in the zone. Australia’s current nuclear

policies subvert the spirit and intention, if not also the letter, of several of these important treaty obligations. Australia is the only country in the world that is located in a nuclear-free zone and also subscribes to extended nuclear deterrence.

THE WAY FORWARD

Australia's record on nuclear disarmament has been at best patchy and inconsistent. At worst, we have positively encouraged nuclear proliferation. It is time to end the hypocrisy.

There are many things Australia could do to actively promote a nuclear-weapon-free world rather than the current precarious nuclear status quo. As a strong ally of the United States, our actions would be particularly powerful in sending the message that nuclear weapons undermine everyone's security, even those sheltering under the "nuclear umbrella".

- First and foremost, Australia should end its reliance on nuclear weapons by renouncing extended nuclear deterrence. This would not require a renunciation of our alliance with the US. New Zealand re-

nounced nuclear weapons in 1984, and the US maintains a military relationship with New Zealand according to its own needs.

- Australia must get behind global efforts for a treaty to outlaw and eliminate nuclear weapons. A vast majority of governments, the UN secretary-general, and the Australian Red Cross have called for negotiations to begin. With Australia now a member of the UN Security Council, there could be no greater contribution to global security than the determination to bring a nuclear

weapons ban into existence.

- Australia must divest all public funds, especially those of the nation's Future Fund, from companies that manufacture, maintain and modernise nuclear weapons.
- Australia's uranium, if it is to be mined at all, must not be exported to any nation with nuclear weapons. No nuclear-weapon state has absolutely distinct and separate civil and military nuclear facilities, and no nuclear-weapon state complies fully with the NPT's Article VI requirement to pursue nuclear disarmament. Any country that receives

Australian uranium should be prohibited from extracting plutonium (which can be used for nuclear bombs) from spent reactor fuel.

- Funding for disarmament education and research would help to raise awareness of the dire threat that nuclear weapons pose, and the urgent need for action to eliminate them. Such funds are not out of reach, as we observe large sums being channelled into education about Australia's military history, but the missing factor is a political decision that peace and disarmament education is important.

“As youth from Hiroshima, we are deeply concerned that our future is still being threatened by close to 20,000 nuclear weapons. We are writing to you to ask for help in eliminating this threat.”

– Letter from school students in Hiroshima, Japan, to the Australian prime minister

Australia’s contributions to nuclear disarmament since the humanitarian catastrophes at Hiroshima and Nagasaki have been at best patchy and inconsistent. At worst, Australia has positively encouraged proliferation by claiming that nuclear deterrence works for us. If these instruments of terror are not abolished, they will be used again. Australia is among the countries targeted. There will be very little help for those who survive, and the suffering is likely to be on a scale the world has not yet seen and for which there can be no meaningful preparation. It is time to move beyond hypocrisy.



Peace march: ICAN campaigners call for Australian leadership on a nuclear weapons ban treaty. Credit: Adam Dempsey



“Extended deterrence is a key element of Australia’s national security. Confidence that a nuclear attack on US allies would be met with a response-in-kind has assured very close US allies, like Australia, that they do not need to develop their own nuclear weapons.”

– Dennis Richardson, Australian Ambassador to the US, 2009

FURTHER READING

Fact or Fission: The truth about Australia’s nuclear ambitions

Richard Broinowski, Scribe Publications, 2003

Catastrophic Humanitarian Harm

International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, 2012 (www.icanw.org)

‘Just in Case’: Extended nuclear deterrence in the defence of Australia

Richard Tanter, *Pacific Focus*, Vol XXVI, No. 1 (April 2011), 113–136

Defending Australia in the Asia-Pacific Century: Force 2030

2009 Defence White Paper (www.defence.gov.au/whitepaper/)

Report of the Canberra Commission on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons

Australian Government, August 1996

An Illusion of Protection: The unavoidable limitations of safeguards on nuclear materials and the export of uranium to China

Medical Association for Prevention of War and the Australian Conservation Foundation, 2006 (www.mapw.org.au)

Who’s Watching the Nuclear Watchdog?: A critique of the Australian Safeguards and Non-Proliferation Office

Richard Broinowski, Tilman Ruff, Alan Roberts and Jim Green, 2007 (www.energyscience.org.au)

Eliminating Nuclear Threats: A practical agenda for global policymakers

Report of the International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, 2010 (www.icnnd.org)

Don’t Bank on the Bomb: A global report on the financing of nuclear weapons producers

International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, 2012 (www.dontbankonthebomb.com)

Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament

Joint Standing Committee on Treaties Report 106, September 2009

Delegitimizing Nuclear Weapons: Examining the validity of nuclear deterrence

James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies and the Monterey Institute of International Studies, 2010

www.icanw.org.au