

The Chairperson

Joint Standing Committee on Treaties

Enquiry into Proposed Uranium Sales to China

Dear Sir/Madam

In regard to making any sales to China of any products, I often recall that in the 1950's that there was enormous disruption to the people of Tibet when a unilateral decision was made by the Chinese Government to attack and take over the sovereign state of Tibet.

The consequences of that action are still rebounding around the world to-day. Consequently I wonder if when giving consideration to exporting a product which has had a very chequered history of its own especially in respect of safety and misuse around the globe, that regard has been given to the human rights, worker safety, protection for whistle blowers, and even the disregard for the accepted standards of trade carried out by China. I am sure that you are aware of the many complaints made against the Chinese Government and their treatment of the people who profess to follow the Falun Gong philosophy. Included in their treatment is imprisonment without trial, torture (involving being used as prison labor) and even death. Given that these experiences might reflect the attitude that this repressive, secretive and murderous Government holds, then doing any business with them is certainly fraught with danger, adding the additional danger dealing with a material which is intrinsically linked with Atomic weapons is a path Australia should not go down.

The record of China and its dealing with international treaties certainly does not give one any confidence that they will necessarily keep faith with any agreement which Australia might require them to sign in respect of transferring the use of Uranium to the manufacture of nuclear weapons.

Indeed providing Uranium to China solely for the use in power generation must free up their own uranium supply for the use in making weapons of mass destruction. This must be considered a reality and should be avoided under any circumstances.

Another consideration is what should Australia really be doing in the current climate of global instability. It can certainly be claimed that already there are too many nuclear weapons in the world and to tempt a country whose senior general has made an open statement that the use of nuclear weapons against the United States would be a response in the event of any targeting of any Chinese area by 'missiles and position-guided ammunition' must also be avoided in a situation where that country has indicated publicly that they do not have enough uranium for civilian and military uses.

There are many reasons why trade with China would be against the wishes and best interest of the people of Australia and the world, but the most compelling one in my eyes is that there is already too much nuclear material available for the manufacture of nuclear weapons and Australia should not be making more available on the world especially to a country which has shown that it has scant regard for its own people and consequently would show little regard for other people.

Yours truly,

Pat Finegan

18 September 2006