

Submission No.170.....

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The Hon Andrew Thompson MP
Joint Standing Committee on Treaties
Parliament House
CANBERRA

Dear Mr. Thompson,

Like most of the general public I remained extremely disturbed by the constant flow of news of torture, rape and genocide in the world today.

All conservatives believe that the Law is there to deter criminals and provide justice for victims. Sadly in many countries Law and Order barely exists or is roundly ignored by the quest of National leaders to subjugate others. It is for these very countries for which the ICC has been primarily formed.

Thirty years ago the US Military court-martialled Lieutenant William Calley, for his part in the My Lai massacre of 20 innocent women, children in Vietnam. They sentenced him to twenty years hard labour. The Australian public would expect similar action to be taken if an ADF soldier had committed such atrocities. Hence the ICC would have no need to "hijack our sovereignty".

If only there were International laws to act as some deterrence. Perhaps they may have been of some use in preventing the disaster in East Timor? Here the cost to the UN, to which we contribute, was in excess of a billion dollars. So far twenty UN workers have died. *Their* families would be unimpressed by arguments that deterrent laws, which may have saved their lives, are not to be enacted because they might infringe the national sovereign rights of their home country!

Last month Ghana agreed to ratify the Rome Treaty. The Ghanaian Minister for Justice, Nana Akufo-Addo gave an impassioned speech promoting the ICC..."The implementation of the Statute by the nations of Africa are matters of great moment. It would mean that we have decided to turn a new page in the history of the African people's journey towards freedom and justice. It would mean that we have turned our back on the brutal and genocidal wars that have wrecked our sister nations of Liberia, Sierra Leone, Rwanda, Burundi, the Congo, Ethiopia and Eritrea."

Surely it is time that we led the world and put behind the sense of nihilism we all had in the 20th Century when the likes of Idi Amin, Papa Doc and Pinochet could find refuge in sovereign immunity and the protection of friendly states.

Violations of Human Rights and genocide have epitomised the 20th Century. Yet world and national opinions are changing. Surely at the start of this New Century, we need to end the impunity of Dictators, their arrogance of both Human Rights and international opinion?

Mature liberal democracies are ratifying the Treaty in droves. They include Canada, France, Germany and Italy. Switzerland and the UK will follow them. President Chirac has called on the Franco-Hispanic world to follow suit.

Should we not be taking a similar lead in Asia?

Yours respectfully,

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