



BI-WEEKLY TREATY REVIEW



04 November – 17 November 2008

DTRA

CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION (CWC)

Last Remaining VX Nerve Agent Eliminated at UMCDF

CMA, 6 November 2008, <http://www.cma.army.mil/>

The U.S. Army Chemical Materials Agency (CMA) announced the safe destruction yesterday of the last VX nerve agent-filled M23 landmine in the Umatilla Chemical Depot (UMCD) stockpile in Oregon, marking the end of all VX-filled munitions stored at the site. (379 words)

[Click here for full text.](#)

Chem Demil Program May See More Funding and Scrutiny, Activists Say

Defense Environment Alert, 11 November 2008, accessed via Lexis Nexis

The Defense Department's chemical weapons destruction program could see gains in funding or stepped-up environmental scrutiny with the election of Barack Obama to the presidency and key candidates to Congress, environmental activists say... (590 words) [Click here for full text.](#)

Russian Chemical Weapons Disposal Plant Destroys 97 Percent of Lewisite

ITAR-TASS, 12 November 2008, accessed via Open Source Center

The chemical weapons disposal plant in Kambarka, Udmurtia, has destroyed 97 percent of lewisite stored on the grounds, the head of the conventional problems department in Udmurtia's government, said on Wednesday [November 12]. (1,004 words) [Click here for full text.](#)

CONVENTION ON CLUSTER MUNITIONS

Finland Refuses to Sign Cluster Bomb Ban

European Report, 4 November 2008, accessed via Lexis Nexis

Finland is expected to be the only European Union member state not to sign, on December 2 and 3, the Oslo Treaty banning cluster bombs. (417 words) [Click here for full text.](#)

Beirut Regional Conference on the Convention on Cluster Munitions

Qatar News Agency, 10 November 2008, accessed via Lexis Nexis

The Regional Conference on the Convention on Cluster Munitions will be held in Beirut tomorrow [November 11] at the joint invitation of the Government of Lebanon and Norway. (243 words) [Click here for full text.](#)



News articles and publications found on the DTIRP website are compilations of open source current news articles and commentary concerning significant arms control treaty and related national security issues. The publications aim to give a balanced representation of how the public, other government organizations, and the media may view these arms control and threat reduction programs and issues. They are intended to serve the informational needs of Department of Defense (DoD) officials in the continuing assessment of defense policies, programs and actions. Further reproduction or redistribution for private use or gain is subject to original copyright restrictions. The views and opinions expressed in these articles are not necessarily those supported by DoD, the Defense Threat Reduction Agency, or the DTIRP.



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CONVENTION ON CLUSTER MUNITIONS (CONT.)

Japan Moving Toward Signing International Accord to Ban Cluster Bombs

Japan Economic Newswire, 14 November 2008, accessed via Lexis Nexis

The Japanese government is making arrangements to sign an international accord to ban cluster bombs, Chief Cabinet Secretary Takeo Kawamura said Friday [November 14].

(154 words) [Click here for full text.](#)

COMPREHENSIVE NUCLEAR TEST-BAN TREATY (CTBT)

Mozambique Ratifies the CTBT

CTBTO, 6 November 2008, <http://www.ctbto.org/>

On 4 November 2008, Mozambique ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) which bans all nuclear explosions on Earth. (300 words) [Click here for full text.](#)

Signing of Tsunami Warning Arrangement with Indonesia

CTBTO, 11 November 2008, <http://www.ctbto.org/>

On November 10, 2008, Indonesia signed a Tsunami Warning Arrangement with the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO). (343 words) [Click here for full text.](#)

NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY (NPT)

Australian Inquiry to Review Nuclear Treaties

Canberra Times, 12 November 2008, accessed via Lexis Nexis

Australia's nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation efforts are to be subject to a wide-ranging parliamentary review. (274 words) [Click here for full text.](#)

Pyongyang Rejects Nuclear Sampling

The Korea Herald, 13 November 2008, accessed via Open Source Center

North Korea yesterday [November 12] clarified its intention to not permit nuclear sampling which is a key element to its agreement with the United States last month for verifying the communist country's declaration of nuclear programs. (363 words) [Click here for full text.](#)



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OTTAWA CONVENTION

Switzerland Calls for Greater Efforts to Ban Landmines

The International News, 10 November 2008, <http://www.thenews.com.pk/>

Switzerland on Monday [November 10] called for more efforts by countries worldwide to eradicate anti-personnel mines ahead of a major conference on the subject in Geneva later this month. (183 words) [Click here for full text.](#)

STRATEGIC ARMS REDUCTION TREATY (START)

Russia Readies Response to U.S. START Proposals

ITAR-TASS, 14 November 2008, accessed via *Open Source Center*

Russia is examining U.S. proposals regarding the future of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) and deputy foreign ministers of the two countries are likely to meet in December for consultations, according to a senior Russian diplomat. (210 words) [Click here for full text.](#)

FULL TEXT OF BI-WEEKLY ARTICLES FOLLOWS:



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The U.S. Army Chemical Materials Agency (CMA) announced the safe destruction yesterday of the last VX nerve agent-filled M23 landmine in the Umatilla Chemical Depot (UMCD) stockpile in Oregon, marking the end of all VX-filled munitions stored at the site. The last landmine was destroyed at the Umatilla Chemical Agent Disposal Facility (UMCDF) on November 5, 2008.

CMA's Director Conrad Whyne said "This accomplishment demonstrates the hard work, skill and experience of the men and women that make up the Umatilla team. They have safely destroyed their nerve agent chemical weapons stockpile, reducing the storage risk to the public and bringing us yet another step closer to fulfilling our national imperative of eliminating the U.S. chemical weapons stockpile."

With the elimination of the VX at UMCDF, CMA has safely destroyed nearly 95 percent of the original VX agent stockpile. Only two of the six remaining storage sites have VX left to destroy.

Umatilla's efforts to dispose of all of its nerve agent munitions began in September 2004. Their last nerve agent munition campaign—M23 VX landmines—began September 25 this year. Approximately 122,000 pounds of VX nerve agent in 11,685 landmines were safely stored at UMCD and eliminated by UMCDF. With the end of this campaign, the risk to the surrounding community has been greatly reduced.

Mr. Whyne stressed that this milestone was reached because of the dedication of the Umatilla work force and their close working relationships with local communities, plus oversight by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality. CMA remains committed to continued safe storage and destruction of the remaining U.S. stockpile. Mr. Whyne noted, "Working at our sites is safer than working in a library or at a university. Our goal is to maintain that safety record and culture through the end of agent destruction at all of our storage and disposal sites. Yesterday's achievement at Umatilla is proof that we can reach our goal."

Prior to starting chemical weapons disposal operations UMCD had safely stored 3,717 tons of chemical agent, nearly 12 percent of the Army's original chemical weapons stockpile, for more than 45 years.

UMCDF will now undergo a changeover period, which prepares the site and personnel to destroy mustard ton containers containing approximately 2,350 tons of mustard agent—the site's final disposal campaign.



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Chem Demil Program May See More Funding and Scrutiny, Activists Say

Defense Environment Alert, 11 November 2008, accessed via Lexis Nexis

The Defense Department's [DoD] chemical weapons destruction program could see gains in funding or stepped-up environmental scrutiny with the election of Barack Obama to the presidency and key candidates to Congress, environmental activists say, although one source says it is too early to know the direction the program will take under the incoming president.

Over the years, the chemical demilitarization program has grown exponentially in cost and faced mounting schedule delays, and also encountered significant litigation from activists over destruction decisions, particularly the use of incineration. It has also experienced major budget cuts, particularly in the chemical agent neutralization program, with key congressional members weighing in to push the budgets back up to keep programs running.

With the advent of a new administration and Congress, the program is under congressional mandates to complete destruction of the nation's stockpiled chemical weapons by 2017—a deadline six years earlier than the date by which the last stockpile is currently expected to be eliminated. The two sites scheduled to finish destruction of weapons significantly past the 2017 date are in Lexington, KY, and Pueblo, CO, both part of DoD's Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives (ACWA) program, which is neutralizing these stockpiles. DoD is currently considering plans to accelerate destruction at those sites, and will make public its chosen course early next year.

While one activist with the Chemical Weapons Working Group (CWWG) says it is too early to know what Obama's plans are for the program, the source says that based on the incoming president's general tenor and policies, there should be a certain degree of confidence that the program will receive what it needs to complete its mission in a timely way and that there will be a heightened sensitivity to environmental considerations. CWWG is a chemical demilitarization watchdog coalition of activists from around the country that advocate destruction of chemical weapons through non-incineration means.

A second environmentalist believes that the chemical demilitarization program will see a boost under Obama and the next Congress, with Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY), a strong advocate of sufficient funding for the ACWA program, retaining his Senate seat after a hard-fought campaign. The source believes funding will be increased to help the program try to achieve the 2017 deadline, and also believes Obama will give greater support than President Bush to the Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) program, which supplies money to help demilitarize Russia's stockpile of chemical weapons.

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The source thinks Obama will be more supportive of the international regime that monitors compliance with the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), the treaty that established deadlines for chemical weapons stockpile destruction.

The source makes the case for these changes under an Obama administration by pointing to his support of non-proliferation measures. Obama, along with Sen. Richard Lugar (R-IN), sponsored legislation that was signed into law in 2007 to expand the CTR program to aid former Soviet-bloc countries to get rid of old stockpiles of conventional weapons leftover from the Cold War, and to help other countries halt the transfer of weapons of mass destruction. The source also believes Obama has been supportive of multi-lateral organizations to address regional and global security issues. It follows then that the new president would be supportive of international obligations made by the United States and international organizations such as inspection and verification regimes like that used to implement the CWC, the source says.

Nonetheless, the source says chemical demilitarization is generally considered a lesser priority for funding during wartime. The "big elephant in the room is the budget," the source says. [...]

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Russian Chemical Weapons Disposal Plant Destroys 97 Percent of Lewisite

ITAR-TASS, 12 November 2008, accessed via Open Source Center

The chemical weapons disposal plant in Kambarka, Udmurtia, has destroyed 97 percent of lewisite stored on the grounds, the head of the conventional problems department in Udmurtia's government, Valery Malyshev, said on Wednesday [November 12]. He said 32 of 80 lewisite tanks were being decontaminated at the plant.

"After lewisite has been removed, all 80 tanks will be decontaminated by the end of the first quarter of 2009. After that all processing equipment, tanks, pipelines and everything else that was in contact with the toxic agents will be decontaminated," Malyshev said.

The results of the work will be examined by international experts from the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). They will issue a certificate confirming complete disposal of both the toxic agents and the equipment used for their disposal.

According to Malyshev, the plant has been operating normally since its commissioning in March 2006 and destroying toxic agents slightly ahead of the schedule set forth in the third stage of the federal program for the disposal of stocks of chemical weapons in Russia and Russia's international obligations.

Russia signed the Chemical Weapons Convention [CWC] in 1997. "This allows us to say that Kambarka that participated in the early completion of the second stage of the federal program in April 2007 to destroy 20 percent of Russia's stocks of chemical weapons will fulfill the task of carrying out the third stage of the program," the official said.

Kambarka is one of the seven Russian arsenals of chemical weapons where 6,400 metric tons of lewisite have been kept since the 1940s. This makes up 15.9 percent of all chemical weapons in Russia. Over eight billion roubles were provided for the construction of the chemical weapons disposal plant in Kambarka. Germany, one of Russia's leading partners under the "Global Partnership" program, invested 160 million euros. All stocks of lewisite stored in Kambarka have to be disposed of by 2010.

Another chemical weapons disposal facility located in Maradykovsky, Kirov region, is about to enter a new stage of its operation. It will start disposing of especially hazardous toxic agents—sarin and soman—in March 2009, deputy head of the Federal Department for the Safe Storage and Disposal of Chemical Weapons Nikolai Khlebnikov said. He said the construction of three buildings of this plant would be completed in December 2008.

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Maradykovsky became operational on September 8, 2006 and became Russia's third chemical weapons disposal plant. Over 6,900 combat nerve gases—VX, sarin, soman and mixtures of yperite and lewisite—in over 40,000 aerial bombs and warheads had been kept there since 1953. The plant started destroying VX gases first. Over the past two years, it destroyed over 4,394 metric tons of VX gases and over 740.4 metric tons of reaction masses, which exceeds 50 percent of all toxic agents stored at Maradykovsky. A total of 21,811 pieces of ammunition have undergone detoxification. In accordance with international safety requirements, the bodies of 5,633 pieces of ammunition were deformed and another 1,662 shells are undergoing through the detoxification process.

"The plant has been operating smoothly and without problems for two years. No emergencies have been reported. The safety of people and the environment is ensured by technology," Khlebnikov said. In his opinion, the work of the plant has made a significant contribution to the process of chemical disarmament and allowed Russia to compete the second stage of the federal program nine days ahead of schedule.

Of 8,000 toxic agents, which make up 20 percent of Russia's stocks of chemical weapons, over 4,000 metric tons have been destroyed at Maradykovsky by April 20, 2007. The plant should destroy all of the stocks by 2012. The plant at Maradykovsky stores over 6,900 metric tons of toxic gases (17.4 percent of all chemical weapons).

Another chemical weapons disposal plant located in Shchuchye, Kurgan region, is preparing for a trial run. The plant will start operating at full capacity in the spring of 2009.

The safety of the population and the environment during the disposal of chemical weapons in Russia remains one of the priority issues. The presence of people on the production premises is minimized and some operations are fully automated.

The chemical weapons disposal plant in Shchuchye will be Russia's fifth large-scale facility designed to dispose of highly hazardous toxic agents. A total of 5,467.5 metric tons of highly hazardous toxic agents (sarin, soman, VX) are kept there, making up 13.6 percent of all stocks of chemical weapons in Russia. Over 18 billion roubles have been allocated for the construction of the facility in Shchuchye, including 1.356 billion roubles for the construction and renovation of social infrastructure in the Shchuchye district.

By December 31, 2009, Russia should eliminate 18,000 metric tons (or 45 percent) of its chemical weapons within the framework of the third stage of the program.

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The facility in the village of Leonidovka, Penza region, will take part in implementing the program. Its first phase went on line on June 17, 2008.

The construction of the facility in the town of Shchuchye, Kurgan Region, will be completed later this year.

The final stage of the program envisions the elimination of 100 percent of chemical weapons by December 29, 2012. The factories in the town of Pochev, Bryansk region, and the town of Kizner, Udmurtia, will take part in the implementation of this stage.

According to deputy head of the Federal Industry Agency, Viktor Kholstov, foreign investments in the construction of a chemical weapons disposal facility in the town of Shchuchye, Kurgan Region, will make up some 48 percent.

The United States will be the main foreign sponsor. "It is planned to create two shops at the Shchuchye factory. The United States will fund the construction of one shop, and Russia will fund the second," Kholstov said.

Another ten states, aside from the United States, will make financial contributions to the project. These include Canada, Italy, and Great Britain.

"These countries are allocating funds to purchase industrial equipment and develop infrastructure," the official added.

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Finland Refuses to Sign Cluster Bomb Ban

European Report, 4 November 2008, accessed via Lexis Nexis

Finland is expected to be the only European Union member state not to sign, on December 2 and 3, the Oslo Treaty banning cluster bombs. This is the result of lengthy debates within the Finnish government which, on October 31, settled in favor of the military point of view. This position will be reviewed "once studies on the capacity of the Finnish armed forces have been carried out, as well as studies on the existence, availability and cost of alternative systems."

This position is justified by two arguments: strategic and budgetary. "Cluster munitions play an important role in the credibility, autonomy and prevention of Finnish defense," affirmed the Defense Minister, Jyri Hakamies, on several occasions. The minister also considers that changing weapons will be costly. Between cluster bomb equipment (approximately 30 million euros) and destruction (7-8 million euros), the total loss is 40 million euros. And, according to the Finnish military, there is currently no "possible alternative" means of substitution in the short term (within five or ten years), except for recourse to intelligent weapons. And the Finnish army does not have the means to acquire these weapons.

Begun in 2007, upon the initiative of Norway, negotiations to ban these bombs resulted in an agreement in Dublin in May 2008. It bans the use, development and stockpiling of cluster munitions of all types. While 111 countries have committed to signing it, the largest countries in terms of defense such as Russia, the United States, China, India, Pakistan and Israel have refused to take part in this process.

This worries the NGO members of the Cluster Munition Coalition (CMC), such as Handicap International, which campaigned for this treaty. Because the treaty authorizes interoperability signatory states can take part in joint military action with states which use cluster bombs. Another cause for concern for NGOs is that the definition of the cluster bombs to be banned excludes certain weapons from the field of the treaty. And the states which are part of this will have the right to keep or acquire banned cluster bombs for the purpose of training or mine clearance and to test their own capacity of defense, in unlimited quantities.

Cluster bombs are shells which open when they are dropped and scatter into several hundred mini-bombs on the targeted zone. But between 5% and 30% do not explode and remain a constant threat to civilian populations, for a long time after the war has ended. The most "polluted" countries are Laos, Bosnia, Lebanon, Iraq and Afghanistan.

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Beirut Regional Conference on the Convention on Cluster Munitions

Qatar News Agency, 10 November 2008, accessed via Lexis Nexis

The Regional Conference on the Convention on Cluster Munitions will be held in Beirut tomorrow [November 11] at the joint invitation of the governments of Lebanon and Norway.

The conference comes as part of preparations for the signing of the first International Convention which prohibits the use of cluster munitions, its production, and storage, which is scheduled to be signed in December in Oslo.

In a statement to the media Lebanese Foreign Minister Fawzi Salloukh said that the conference comes within the framework of international action [...].

The statement said that the conference, which begins tomorrow, will highlight the dangers of this type of lethal weapons and the damage to civilians.

The objective of this conference is to address the challenges of mitigating the problems associated with cluster munitions contamination.

Moreover, the conference will focus on the coordination of national and international assistance from a diverse set of actors, and in particular, how this relates to the resource mobilization required for clearance, risk-education and support to victims and their families. The conference will examine how the experiences from the concerted efforts to address the problems caused by cluster munitions in Lebanon can be used as a basis for recommendations on the future implementation of the new convention.

The conference will also engage the region on the issue of cluster munitions as an international norm and discuss the framework for future implementation of the clearance of explosive remnants of war and programs for victims' assistance.

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Japan Moving Toward Signing International Accord to Ban Cluster Bombs

Japan Economic Newswire, 14 November 2008, accessed via Lexis Nexis

The Japanese government is making arrangements to sign an international accord to ban cluster bombs, Chief Cabinet Secretary Takeo Kawamura said Friday [November 14].

"I have heard that (the government) is making arrangements" toward signing the accord, Kawamura told a news conference. The signing ceremony for the accord will be held in Oslo in early December.

At the end of May this year, the Oslo Conference on Cluster Munitions, also known as the Oslo Process, agreed on a draft global accord to totally prohibit cluster bombs, heightening international pressure for the abolition of the weapons.

Japan approved the draft accord on May 30, marking a shift from its previous stance of advocating a partial ban on the use of cluster bombs, which have been criticized for the threat they pose to civilians.

Countries such as the United States and Russia, which possess large amounts of cluster bombs, did not participate in drafting the accord.

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Mozambique Ratifies the CTBT

CTBTO, 6 November 2008, <http://www.ctbto.org/>

On 4 November 2008, Mozambique ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) which bans all nuclear explosions on Earth. This brings the total number of treaty ratifications to 146. Mozambique signed the CTBT on the day it opened for signature, on 26 September 1996.

Tibor Tóth, the Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO), welcomed Mozambique's ratification.

Mozambique's government indicated already at the last Article XIV conference to facilitate the entry into force of the CTBT in September 2007 that it would submit a package of international legal instruments, including the CTBT and the Treaty of Pelindaba, to the Parliament for consideration and adoption. On 26 March 2008, Mozambique ratified the Treaty of Pelindaba which creates a nuclear-weapon-free-zone treaty in Africa and prohibits the testing, development and stationing of nuclear weapons in a member's territory.

The adherence to the CTBT is almost universal. 180 countries have already signed the Treaty. To enter into force, however, the Treaty must be signed and ratified by the 44 States listed in Annex 2 to the Treaty. These States participated in the negotiations of the Treaty in 1996 and possessed nuclear power or research reactors at the time. Thirty-five of these States have ratified the Treaty, including the three nuclear weapon States: France, Russia, and the United Kingdom. The nine remaining States are China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Iran, Israel, Pakistan, and the United States.

A verification regime is being built to monitor compliance with the CTBT. 337 facilities worldwide will monitor the underground, the oceans and the atmosphere for any sign of a nuclear explosion. Today, over 230 facilities have been certified and incorporated into the network, and can send data to the International Data Center at the CTBTO in Vienna.

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Signing of Tsunami Warning Arrangement with Indonesia

CTBTO, 11 November 2008, <http://www.ctbto.org/>

On November 10, 2008, Indonesia signed a Tsunami Warning Arrangement with the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO). The arrangement will help Indonesian authorities to issue tsunami warnings earlier than before. The Indonesian Tsunami Early Warning System (Ina TEWS) was inaugurated a day later, on November 11, 2008.

The Tsunami Warning Arrangement was signed by CTBTO Executive Secretary Tibor Tóth, and the President of the Meteorological and Geophysical Agency of Indonesia (BMG), Sri Woro B. Harijono. Tóth underlined that facilities making up the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty's (CTBT) International Monitoring System (IMS) send "the speediest, most reliable and highest quality data" especially compared to information transmitted by other organizations, stating that "within 30 seconds, around 90 percent of the information reaches the tsunami warning centre in Jakarta." Such bilateral arrangements have also been formalized with Japan, Australia and the Philippines.

As one of the nine states that still have to ratify the Treaty before it can enter into force, Indonesia is a country of particular importance for the CTBT. Indonesia, which has shown strong political and financial support for the Treaty, has recently declared that is undertaking "serious preparations for ratification of the CTBT" at the latest session of the United Nation General Assembly's First Committee. The other remaining countries are China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt, India, Iran, Israel, Pakistan, and the United States.

A verification regime is being built to monitor compliance with the CTBT. 337 facilities worldwide will monitor the underground, the oceans and the atmosphere for any sign of a nuclear explosion. Today, over 230 facilities have been certified and incorporated into the network, and can send data to the International Data Centre at the CTBTO in Vienna.

In addition to verifying the nuclear test ban, the data from these stations have a variety of important civil and scientific applications which could contribute to sustainable development and human welfare. Apart from tsunami warning, these include research on ocean processes and marine life; climate change research; volcanic eruption monitoring for aviation safety, and many more.

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BI-WEEKLY TREATY REVIEW



04 November – 17 November 2008

DTRA

Australian Inquiry to Review Nuclear Treaties

Canberra Times, 12 November 2008, accessed via Lexis Nexis

Australia's nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation efforts are to be subject to a wide-ranging parliamentary review. Prime Minister Kevin Rudd has directed the Federal Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Treaties to undertake an inquiry into nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation treaties that involve Australia. These include the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty [NPT], the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty [CTBT], the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty, and bilateral safeguards agreements that cover the export of Australian uranium. The joint committee is to review how the treaties might be made "more comprehensive or effective."

The committee's investigation will be the first broad parliamentary review of Australia's nuclear nonproliferation commitments since a Senate committee looked at the issues in 1995. Mr. Rudd referred the inquiry to the treaties committee's chairman, Labor backbencher Kelvin Thomson, in a letter dated October 13. The joint committee will undertake its work in parallel with the Government's International Commission on Nuclear Nonproliferation and Disarmament, jointly chaired by former foreign minister Gareth Evans and former Japanese foreign minister Yoriko Kawaguchi.

Mr. Rudd hopes the commission will help shape a global consensus on nuclear issues before the 2010 NPT review conference. Under Mr. Thompson's chairmanship, the joint committee has demonstrated independent thinking on nuclear issues, rejecting the advice of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and recommending the Government not ratify a nuclear treaty with Russia. Mr. Thompson said he was honored the Prime Minister had entrusted his committee to carry out the inquiry. "I believe the committee can play an important role in engaging the Australian community and other parliaments in the debate leading up to the 2010 Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty review conference," he said.

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BI-WEEKLY TREATY REVIEW



04 November – 17 November 2008

DTRA

Pyongyang Rejects Nuclear Sampling

The Korea Herald, 13 November 2008, accessed via Open Source Center

North Korea yesterday [November 12] clarified its intention to not permit nuclear sampling which is a key element to its agreement with the United States last month for verifying the communist country's declaration of nuclear programs.

"The verification method will be limited to inspectors' access to the site, document confirmation and interviews with engineers," the North's Foreign Ministry spokesman said in a statement.

On October 11, the United States said the North had agreed on the use of scientific procedures for verification, including taking samples out of North Korea, and doing various forensic activities to verify nuclear activities. Washington removed Pyongyang from its terrorism blacklist in return for the North's agreement on the verification principle.

The spokesman claimed that the chief U.S. nuclear envoy, Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill, had agreed to the verification scope during his visit to Pyongyang on October 1-3...The statement accused other member nations to the six-party talks of delaying the resumption of the nuclear disarmament talks by demanding the North accept the sampling.

The North also said the verification will be applied only to the Yongbyon facilities, denying the U.S. announcement that Pyongyang had agreed to verification of all of its nuclear programs, including the suspected uranium-based nuclear program, nuclear proliferation and its plutonium-producing facilities. Washington has said Pyongyang has agreed that experts from all six parties will have access to all declared North Korean facilities and, "based on mutual consent," to undeclared sites.

The North said the verification will be allowed after a provision of pledged economic aid will be completed. Under a 2007 denuclearization-for-aid deal, North Korea pledged to disable the Yongbyon nuclear facilities in return for 1 million tons of heavy fuel oil or equivalent assistance.

The North said it is in a "special circumstance," and U.S. negotiator Hill had agreed on the communist country's status. It referred the special circumstances to a status that the North has defected [from] the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty [NPT] and the International Atomic Energy Agency [IAEA], and declared it as a nuclear weapon state outside the NPT regime. The North also said it has slowed down disabling its Yongbyon nuclear plant due to the delayed arrival of energy compensation...

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04 November – 17 November 2008

DTRA

Switzerland Calls for Greater Efforts to Ban Landmines

The International News, 10 November 2008, <http://www.thenews.com.pk/>

Switzerland on Monday [November 10] called for more efforts by countries worldwide to eradicate anti-personnel mines ahead of a major conference on the subject in Geneva later this month.

Juerg Streuli, Switzerland's ambassador to the 156-nation Ottawa Convention banning landmines, said he will chair the ninth conference of states party to the convention in Geneva from November 24-28.

Although much has been done in the intervening decade, "the objectives of the convention are far from being reached," he told journalists.

"For some countries the humanitarian task of de-mining is enormous. Others are far behind on their timetables," he said.

Sylvie Brigot of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) said that Greece, Turkey and Belarus have all failed to clear and destroy their stockpiles of anti-personnel landmines under an agreed schedule.

Under the treaty, 156 signatory countries committed to clearing and destroying mines on their territory "as soon as possible but not later than 10 years," said an ICBL statement.

The ICBL won the 1997 Nobel Peace Prize for its part in bringing about the Mine Ban Treaty in Ottawa that same year.

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04 November – 17 November 2008

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Russia Readies Response to U.S. START Proposals

ITAR-TASS, 14 November 2008, accessed via Open Source Center

Russia is examining U.S. proposals regarding the future of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) and deputy foreign ministers of the two countries are likely to meet in December for consultations, according to a senior Russian diplomat.

"We have recently received (from the U.S. Department of State) a draft of the Russian-U.S. legally binding agreement to replace START and we are working on the document with the counterparts from various Russian departments," head of the security and disarmament department of the Russian foreign ministry Anatoly Antonov told Tass on Thursday [November 13].

"We shall shortly prepare our response to the document and will correspondingly organize consultations at the level of deputy foreign ministers. I believe that may happen in early December, however the exact date and venue of such consultations have not been agreed yet," said Antonov, who participates in a regular session of the joint commission that discusses START-related issues. The commission comprises representatives of Russia, the United States, Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan.

START expires in December 2009 and the parties have to decide whether to terminate it or prolong for another five years.

"We are only beginning to consider the problem. It is only the initial stage and we have a year to consider the problem," Antonov said.

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