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Submission: DEFENCE WHITE PAPER COMMUNITY CONSULTATION 2008 People for Nuclear Disarmament (WA) thanks you for this opportunity to engage in redefining Australia's defence strategies.

#### NUCLEAR CONSIDERATIONS

The Rudd Government's International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament gives hope that Australia will inspire strong advocacy for updating and strengthening the much-troubled NPT at its Review Conference, 2010. This could lead to a Nuclear Weapons Convention becoming a practised reality. The practical steps to nuclear disarmament to be undertaken within a framework of transparency, verifiability and irreversibility are already well known (see recommendations of the Canberra Commission) - We just have to get on with them.

Trust-building is essential for this international mutuality. This submission will concentrate on how Australia could contribute more towards building that trust.

PND recommends that the Rudd Government reverse the Howard era Australia-Russia uranium deal. The Georgian situation demonstrates how easily Russian military stridency (and upgrading of its nuclear weapons systems) can escalate.

Neither ought Australia be allowing exporting uranium to nuclear-armed India. Through Australia's strong position within the NSG, we should have vigorously opposed the acquiescence of the IAEA and the NSG in allowing India concessions outside the NPT to implement the US-India nuclear deal. While Australia won't export uranium to India, we have done little to prevent others doing so. Instead we could help India meet its energy demands by sharing our expertise and technology in renewable energy technologies, energy efficiencies and energy conservation. The US-India deal will weaken the NPT by providing a precedent for other non-signatory nuclear armed states to base claims for 'strictly civilian' nuclear materials and know-how - without surrendering their nuclear weapons. Historically there is little reason for confidence that the civilian and military streams of uranium use will remain separate. Hence, PND also opposes exporting uranium to China. At the very least, that could release China's other domestic supplies for its weapons program. While DFAT controls our uranium exports, the military implications of this trade must certainly be of high concern to the Defence Department.

#### STRATEGIES FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Throughout history, humans have resorted to war to settle differences - but war does not work! Its practice has always meant death and incalculable pain and destruction leaving a long legacy of profound unhappiness. Modern methods of warfare have seen the combatant to civilian victim ratio change dramatically from c. 90:10 early in the twentieth century to c.10:90 now.

Wars' pollutants dangerously contaminate the environment, further damaging human and other life. An example is the legacy of DU in southern Iraq and the Balkans.

Resorting to war indicates a failure of imagination to trust other means of resolution.

Consider the financial cost of war preparation, threat or practice. Globally this is around \$1000 billion annually. A spectacular example is US funding of its missile defence. By participating in this (through Pine Gap), Australia is implicated in the fragile situation between the two Koreas and the US - and also threatening the sense of security in our great trading partner, China. Such military strategies fan a new arms build-up. In this FY, Australia will spend \$22 billion on defence, around \$62 million per day. Minister Fitzgibbon has secured a 3 % real increase annually.

This expenditure is supposedly to strengthen our national security - but does it?

#### HOW CAN WE FEEL SECURE?

We all have basic needs of an assured food and water supply, good health and education, job security, safe homes and secure energy supply. For these needs to be met, our environment must keep healthy and our climate reliable.

Environmental security is profoundly threatened by global warming. A few years ago, the Pentagon regarded this as a far greater threat to humanity than terrorism.

Another important aspect of feeling secure is to feel that there is little or no likelihood of our country being attacked. How can we achieve this feeling?

PND (WA) views global military spending as a vast diversion of work that could be dedicated to meeting humanity's real security needs. In the Australian context this would not mean the end of the ADF - but rather practice of a different philosophy of pre-emptive peace and trust-building, and different training of our defence personnel. We gratefully acknowledge that the ADF already functions partly along these lines as seen for instance in East Timor and the Solomon Islands. Between the Vietnam War to the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan, the ADF has done much peacekeeping or peacemaking work. Our personnel undergo non-violence training for such deployments. However our Iraq and Afghanistan participation has been at the bidding of the US and its insatiable oil demand. We long to see more independence and clarity in the expression of the ADF's engagements.

PND would like to see the ADF become primarily an agent of humanitarian relief, reconstruction, peace-keeping and peace-making. We see that investing heavily in high tech military equipment such as the Aegis system and Seasprite helicopters can be interpreted by our neighbours threatening their security - and so we exacerbate a regional arms race.

How much better it would be to project a posture of friendship and cooperation into our region, to do what we can to stabilise troubled neighbours (at their request) and to help to build sustainable capacity to meet their own populations' real security needs. We could use our wealth, our skills and political stability to spread confidence and trust beyond our shores. Such a strategy would diminish the chances of any country resorting to war.

We also have the UN and the depth of international law upon which to rely in our relationships with the world. By fully supporting these measures, we can contribute so much to resolving potential conflicts without resort to violence.

Presented by Judy Blyth at the Community Consultation in Perth,  
2 September 2008,  
on behalf of People for Nuclear Disarmament (WA)  
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