



Royal United Services Institute of Western Australia

Newsletter

August 2011

Promoting National Security and Defence

Patron: Awaiting Confirmation

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RUSI of WA, Leeuwin Barracks, Riverside Road, East Fremantle
Postal Address: C/- Department of Defence, Locked Bag 5001,
Fremantle, WA, 6160

Editorial

Two perspectives on the sale of Australian uranium to India

If Favour: Thom Woodroffe – Foreign affairs analyst

Against: Scott Ludlum – Greens Senator for WA

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Australia's Military History for Dummies by David Horner

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Uranium Sales to India

COMMENTARY

Nuclear energy has come under the spotlight this year following the massive earthquake and tsunami that hit Japan, prompting a nuclear crisis at the Fukushima power plant. The nuclear debate has been further highlighted following comments by the head of one of the world's largest uranium mining companies, Rio Tinto chairman Jan du Plessis, in Perth that a nuclear Australia was inevitable to reduce the country's carbon emissions. A large proportion of Australia's uranium deposits are found in WA, which has been mooted as a viable global nuclear waste dump due to its vast isolated areas of desert. Following on to our discussion last month on the Force Posture Review, this issue of the Newsletter looks at nuclear energy issues closer to home – specifically the sale of uranium to India a non signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Two viewpoints are presented for members' consideration. Thom Woodroffe, a foreign affairs analyst argues that selling uranium to India could help raise nuclear safety standards. Scott Ludlum, Greens Senator for WA argues that selling uranium to India would undermine the Non-Proliferation Treaty and would undermine Australia's opposition to Iran's nuclear program.

Selling Uranium to India Would Help Raise World Nuclear Safety Standards

By Thom Woodroffe

Australia's all-or-nothing approach to where it ships uranium ignores the fact its leverage can actually help raise nuclear safety standards and nonproliferation efforts around the world. The world was understandably shocked by the events of the Fukushima reactor meltdown that continue to drag on.

A month before those events in Japan, I wrote in the *West Australian* urging the Gillard Government to overturn its uranium export ban to India which has become a bad symbol of our diplomatic relationship. At the time, I held out hope that when Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh visits Perth in October for a Commonwealth meeting that he would extend the trip to a bilateral visit during which a reversal in Australia's policy could be announced. But this now looks increasingly unlikely.

The zero-sum mentality of the ban is based on the fact that despite India already being a nuclear power, they have not signed the archaic and exclusive nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. The reality is that the world's appetite for Australia's uranium will not slow in the wake of the Japanese disaster.

This was highlighted last week in Perth by the Resources Minister Martin Ferguson, a closet supporter of nuclear power in Australia, when he said: "What Fukushima will not do is change the fundamental drivers, the increasing population and increasing demand for energy that are behind the desire by some nations for more nuclear power." And he is right.

While several of the 400 nuclear reactors around the world were shut in the wake of Fukushima, the vast bulk continue to operate. These, coupled with increasing global demand from countries such as India - which plans a tenfold increase in nuclear power to 2050 - will keep the world's eyes firmly focused on Australia. Australia is home to 40 per cent of the world's uranium reserves with approximately \$9 billion of that in WA.

On nuclear non-proliferation, this could take the form of embedding various bilateral agreements on use into our uranium trade deals with countries such as India rather than relying on them to simply sign the treaty.

For instance, some have argued that by selling India uranium we could make it conditional on a cessation of the production of fissile material for weapons. This would be a markedly different approach to the treaty all-or-nothing agenda which achieves zero with India as a non-signatory. Such actions would not be without basis.

In 2006, Australia and China signed a bilateral agreement on the peaceful use of nuclear energy and current negotiations under way with the United Arab Emirates are heavily focused on a similar outcome. Similar arrangements can also promote safety and standards on nuclear power. Present arrangements between any country and the International Atomic Energy Agency are not sufficient, lacking any means of enforcement. But a bilateral agreement on the supply of uranium to a reactor, contingent on IAEA safety standards being upheld, would add a measurable safeguard beyond current practise.

But the immaturity with which our domestic political discourse views nuclear power - a nappy-like approach that considers even the debate of the topic politically toxic - has infected our wider foreign policy and risks overshadowing these possibilities. For far too long, Australia's foreign policy elite have either overlooked or completely misunderstood the diplomacy of uranium. It would be ridiculous to think that nuclear power or arms proliferation will not continue in the wake of the Japanese crisis. It will, and we have a real opportunity to leverage our uranium reserves to usher in greater safety standards in the nuclear power industry and redouble our efforts on nonproliferation.

Thom Woodroffe is a foreign affairs analyst

Australia Must Not Sell Uranium to India

By Scott Ludlum

Australia's long-standing policy to not sell uranium to nations refusing to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty must not change. Nuclear trade with India would undermine the fundamental principle of the global non-proliferation regime - the principle that signatories to the NPT can engage in international nuclear trade for their civil nuclear programs while countries which remain outside the NPT are excluded from civil nuclear trade. For decades, India has been invited to dismantle its nuclear weapons and join the NPT as a non-weapons state. It would then be free to participate in international civil nuclear trade.

Nuclear trade with India will also make it less likely that other non-NPT weapons states such as Israel and Pakistan will disarm and accede to the NPT. Pakistan resents the selective

support for India's nuclear program and is well aware of the potential for the US-India deal and Australian uranium exports to facilitate an expansion of India's arsenal of nuclear weapons. The precedent set by nuclear trade with India increases the risk of other countries pulling out of the NPT, building nuclear weapons and doing so with the expectation that civil nuclear trade would continue.

According to WikiLeaks, Federal Resources Minister Martin Ferguson has told the US Embassy in Canberra that a deal to supply India with nuclear fuel could be reached within three to five years. The minister should know that would be illegal. As a signatory to the Treaty of Rarotonga, we are obliged under Article IV to not provide source or special fissionable material or equipment to states without safeguards under the NPT. Arguing that India's nuclear facilities will be brought under safeguards through nuclear trade is a case of one country negotiating its own tailored and selective safeguards regime. I have spent time in India studying the nuclear industry, which is famous for its unrealistic projections of future civil nuclear prospects.

The document Vision 2020 deemed it possible and necessary to have an installed nuclear power capacity of 20,000MW by 2020. Vision 2020 involves the setting up of additional nuclear power plants, with five fast-breeder reactors generating 2500MW, heavy water reactors generating 10,000MW and about 8000MW generated by light-water reactors. Given that nuclear power currently provides around 2 per cent of India's total electricity, and considering the rate of build and the economic downturn, this is highly unlikely.

In 1985, a 15-year plan was formulated which proposed that India go in for massive new construction to bring the capacity to 10,000MW by 2000. The reality in 2009 was an installed nuclear capacity of only 4120MW. India's current installed energy capacity is 145,626MW. At a compounding rate of growth of 8 per cent annually, as is predicted between 2009 and 2020, total generation capacity will double to about 339,547MW.

If the nuclear industry were to account for 25 per cent of this capacity as claimed, the total would have to increase from present capacity of 4120MW to 84,886MW, the equivalent of building eight 1000MW plants every year from today to 2020.

Selling uranium to India is an unwise way to "recognise reality". Australia has helped sustain opposition to Iran's nuclear program. What lesson is Iran likely to learn from such a hypocritical use of the NPT if Australia sells uranium to India?

Scott Ludlam is a Greens Senator for WA

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Program

Blamey Oration Confirmed

Thursday 18 August

7:30 for 8 pm

1st Floor Theatrette, Building 7 Leeuwin Barracks

Dr Ian J Watt AO, Secretary of the Department of Defence will speak on "The Challenges of Managing Australia's Department of Defence in today's environment".

RSVPs are requested: 9311 2429 (Tuesdays or Thursdays – office hours) or otto.pelczar@defence.gov.au

The 2009 Defence White paper may be found at:

<http://www.defence.gov.au/whitepaper/>

Notice of Annual General Meeting

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

TUESDAY, 9 AUGUST 2011, AT 1.00 PM

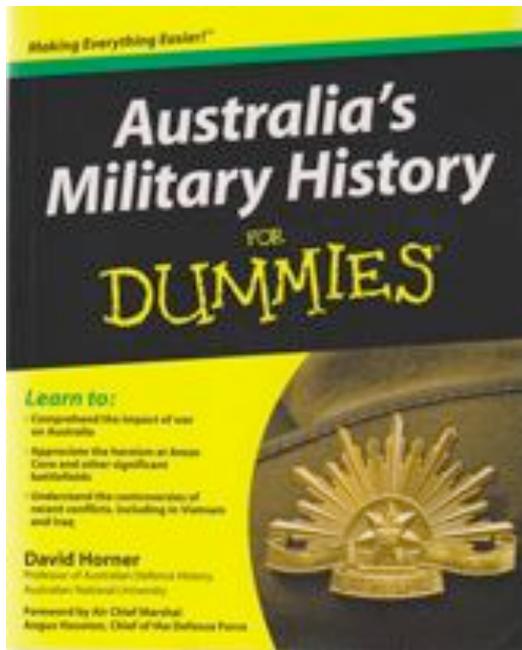
Agenda

1. Confirmation of the Minutes of the AGM held on 10 August 2010.
2. Presentation of Annual Report, Financial Statement and Balance Sheet.
3. Library Report
4. Election of Office Bearers and Councilors.
5. Other business of which due notice has been given.
6. General business.

A Luncheon (12:00 for 12:30) will precede the AGM and a discussion will follow.

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Book Review



Australia's Military History for Dummies, by David Horner

Reviewed by Norman Ashworth

When I first saw this book I was skeptical as to how a book in the *For Dummies* series could cover such a vast and complex subject as Australia's military history in any meaningful way. I was mistaken. The author is Australia's premier military historian, Professor David Horner, who has done an excellent job of summarizing, and giving meaning to, Australia's military history from Colonial times, through two World Wars, to the ongoing conflict in Afghanistan.

Not only does Professor Horner cover the key events of our military history, but also puts them into the context of how the military works for those with little or no experience of the military. In particular, I liked his final section which lists, in turn, Australia's top ten military leaders, ten famous battles and ten myths about aspects of our military history. Those with some knowledge of Australia's military history might enjoy drawing up their own lists in these three areas, and sharing the results with fellow members of the RUSI.

This book is clearly not an academic tome, or a military reference book. Rather, it is a book for the general reader. Serious military historians, and especially those who were themselves players in the events described, will no doubt criticize it for not adequately covering their particular segment of military history; or, being Navy or Air Force types, criticize the book for being biased towards the Army, with naval and air aspects "shoved in" to give it a tri-service flavor. ("You can't please all of the people all of the time") I would commend this book for both the general reader (it would also make an excellent gift for a grandson/granddaughter) and the military historian alike. If along the way, you do find aspects of this book to criticize, please air your views in the RUSI Newsletter.

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On Line Resources - Knowing Where to Go – Australia's National Security

The website <http://www.nationalsecurity.gov.au/> provides a single access point for national security information from the Australian Government.

Australia's approach to national security is based on strong cooperative, coordinated and consultative relationships between the State and Territory Governments, the Australian Government, their departments and agencies and international partners.

At any given time Australia faces challenges to our nation's security from a range of sources which can put institutions of state, people, economic assets and technology at risk. These challenges include espionage, foreign interference, terrorism, politically motivated violence, border violations, cyber attack, organised crime, natural disasters and biosecurity events.

This website predominantly provides information on counter-terrorism, the roles of Australia's national security and policing agencies, national security coordination arrangements and the national counter-terrorism plan.

The Emergency Management in Australia website <http://www.ema.gov.au/> provides information about Australian and regional emergency management in a national security context, including content on policy formulation, national emergency operations and the development of national and international capability.

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The 2009 Defence White paper may be found at: <http://www.defence.gov.au/whitepaper/>

Maps and information for Force Posture Review:

<http://www.defence.gov.au/review/posture/>

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