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PEACE RESEARCH CENTRE

WORKING PAPER NO. 64

AUSTRALIA AND DISARMAMENT

by

Richard Butler



PEACE RESEARCH CENTRE

WORKING PAPERS

This Working Paper NO. 64 provide readers with access to current research dealing with peace and security issues - particularly

AUSTRALIA AND DISARMAMENT

Publication as a 'Working Paper' does not preclude subsequent publication in scholarly journals or books, indeed it may facilitate publication by providing feedback from readers to authors.

Richard Butler

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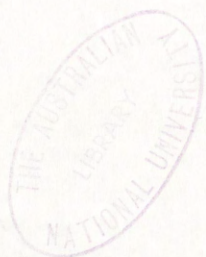
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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Richard Butler joined the Australian Department of External Affairs (now Foreign Affairs and Trade) in 1965, and has served in Vienna, New York, Singapore, Bonn and Paris. In 1983 he was appointed as Australia's first Ambassador for Disarmament. He led the Australian delegation to the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, and to other conferences. Currently, Richard Butler is Australia's Ambassador to Thailand.

MEMORANDUM FOR

THE PRESIDENT

FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE

SUBJECT: [Illegible]

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ABSTRACT

This paper reviews Australia's role in disarmament during the past six years. It then looks at the future and offers some views and speculations on the tasks Australia will face in the next four to five years.

There have been reports of a rise in disaffection during the past six years. It is not clear at the time and effort some views and opinions are held. It is not clear at the time and effort some views and opinions are held.

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It is almost six years since the first Hawke government was elected. One of the early decisions of the government was to greatly elevate the attention Australia would give to issues of arms control and disarmament and to allocate new resources to its work in those fields.

In this paper I propose to review Australia's role in disarmament during those past six years. I will then turn to the future and offer some views and speculations on the tasks Australia will face in the four or five years ahead.

If we have had an abiding concern in the field of disarmament during the past six years it has been with the need to stop the nuclear arms race and to bring about truly significant reductions in those weapons of mass destruction. Associated with this concern, which is recognised as the primary responsibility of nuclear weapons states, has been our major policy goals of seeing an end to all nuclear testing and the preservation of a viable regime for the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Of necessity, we have conducted our national policy taking into account the realities of the relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union. This can be illustrated by reference to the chronology of main events that has accompanied Australian disarmament policy, principally in the nuclear field, but also in other areas of major policy concern.

The election of the first Hawke government came shortly after the end of a two year period in which there had been virtually no disarmament dialogue between the United States and the Soviet Union.

Instead there had been rising tension in an environment of continuing deployment by the Soviet Union of new short and intermediate range missiles and the efforts by European NATO countries to remain firm on the December 1979 'Dual-Track' decision, namely, to deploy offsetting American INF missiles from late 1983 onwards unless negotiations allowed another course. In November 1981, two years after this decision and one year into the first Reagan Administration, negotiations on INF systems commenced.

Six months later, in June 1982, the START negotiations commenced and the now fabled 'walk in the woods' by Nitze and Kvitzinsky took place in Geneva.

During this period, there was no cause for optimism about those negotiations. Their tone and atmosphere reflected continuing tension and disagreement. These were the circumstances under which the Hawke government took office. They were circumstances which caused widespread anxiety within the Australian community and indeed, throughout the world.

While it was merely coincidental that President Reagan gave his 'Star Wars' speech in the same month of 1983 in which the Hawke government was elected, it did little to mitigate the widespread anxiety about Soviet/United States relations and the nuclear arms race.

Immediately following the Australian elections, the government conducted a review of the ANZUS Treaty, an action which had never been taken in the thirty years of the existence of that Treaty.

Following the completion of that review, Foreign Minister Hayden and Defence Minister Scholes went to Washington to take part in the meeting of the ANZUS council at which it was proposed that the three partners conduct a review of the Treaty.

Portions of the agreed communique of 19 July 1983 are worth recalling in the context of a review of Australia's role in disarmament:

The council members reaffirm their commitment to the negotiation of effective, equitable and verifiable arms control measures, including reductions of nuclear armaments ... the council members reaffirmed their strong commitment to preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons and agreed to intensify their efforts to strengthen the international non-proliferation regime through multilateral and bilateral measures. They recognised that the international non-proliferation regime is strengthened when the nuclear weapons states are able to demonstrate progress in fulfilling their solemn Treaty promise to pursue negotiations on effective and verifiable measures to reduce nuclear armaments and to end the nuclear arms race. In this context they reaffirmed their governments' policies of working towards the goal of a comprehensive and fully verifiable nuclear Test Ban Treaty, and they took note of the continued examination of verification and compliance issues related to a nuclear test ban in the committee on disarmament. They

also undertook to work in a constructive and cooperative manner to ensure the success of the Third Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of nuclear weapons in 1985.

On 15 September 1983 in reporting to the House of Representatives on the ANZUS Council's review of the Treaty, Foreign Minister Hayden said:

The review has led us to a firm and unequivocal reaffirmation of the alliance as fundamental to Australia's national security and foreign and defence policies. In saying this, I do not say that the Treaty guarantees Australia's national safety and welfare, nor do I place us in that posture of happy dependence that has satisfied the foreign policy ambitions of many Australians in the past both within and without this parliament.

He went on to assert that it was the government's view:

That by stripping away the misconceptions and the unrealistic expectations which surrounded the Treaty, we would strengthen it and bring it back to terms of reality.

In bringing his statement to conclusion Foreign Minister Hayden made the following interesting remarks bearing upon Australia's role in arms control and disarmament:

It is our considered view that we cannot expect to be influential in the crucial issues of arms control, arms reduction and disarmament initiatives both at relevant international fora and through appropriate bilateral contact if we cop-out completely on such an important matter as nuclear deterrence. Therein, as things stand now, rests the only viable option of effective restraint to nuclear conflict. It is important that we fulfil our moral obligations in effecting that restraint if we are genuinely concerned about minimising to the greatest extent possible, in prevailing circumstances, the possibility of such conflict. From that credible and morally committed position, we are in a sound and influential position to argue beyond the present less than steady circumstances for a better arrangement based on armaments negotiations - conventional as well as nuclear -

leading to effective controls, hopefully arms reduction and ideally, but perhaps not plausibly given the nature of the world we know, to disarmament.

A few weeks later Foreign Minister Hayden made his first statement at the General Assembly of the United Nations. It was substantially devoted to disarmament and in addition to reiterating Australia's already familiar policy objectives in the nuclear field he introduced a new theme - concern about the impact of the global arms trade on both security and economy. He referred to both the licit and illicit forms of that trade. In the latter context he called, specifically, for international action to curb the black market trade in arms.

In November of the same year the INF/START talks came to their abrupt halt with the Soviet walkout.

In April 1984 a new step was taken in another field of major disarmament concern to Australia namely the tabling at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, by Vice-President Bush, of the draft of an international convention which would ban and destroy all chemical weapons.

The only delegation to the conference to respond on that day to the United States' actions was the Australian delegation. This action was taken because the elimination of all chemical weapons was then and remains today a major Australian priority in disarmament.

Having taken our case to Washington on nuclear disarmament and the importance of disarmament generally, in the context of the ANZUS review, ten months later in May 1984 Foreign Minister Hayden took that case to Moscow. His visit was the first visit by an Australian Foreign Minister to the Soviet Union for twenty years and it had by then been ten years since the Soviet Union had been visited by an Australian Prime Minister - Gough Whitlam.

Foreign Minister Hayden held detailed talks with Foreign Minister Gromyko over three days.

In the major public statement he made in Moscow he described himself as having:

Come to Moscow to speak of peace ... last year I visited Washington, today I am in Moscow. My purpose in both capitals has been to express Australia's concern for the maintenance of a peaceful and stable world.

He went on:

Australia has an alliance relationship with the United States. This is in our national interest. The Labor government intends to maintain that alliance. Last year in Washington, and subsequently in the Australian Parliament, we also made it clear that, for our government, alliance does not equal servility. We have our own view of the world. We make our own judgements. We are committed to an independent foreign policy within our alliance. We do not follow anyone's lead blindly.

A major point he made in this statement addressed to Foreign Minister Gromyko was with respect to the deployment of intermediate range weapons. He said:

All of us are worried by the proliferation of those missiles. Does anyone feel any safer because they have been deployed? Clearly not. The present stalemate is against all our interests. We have not just allowed ourselves to be history's prisoners. We have become our own gaolers. So I urge you, as I have the Americans to break out of this stalemate. The negotiations on nuclear arms limitations should begin again now, not in twelve months time. The task is too urgent, the danger too great. There should be no further delay.

In August 1984 Foreign Minister Hayden spoke for the first time at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva where in addition to laying out Australia's disarmament priorities he proposed that the Conference should establish a global seismological monitoring network to assist in the verification of a future Comprehensive nuclear Test Ban Treaty.

In January 1985 Secretary of State Shultz and Foreign Minister Gromyko met in Geneva and agreed that the United States and the Soviet Union should resume their bilateral negotiations, but in a new form, the nuclear and space talks. Unlike INF and START, which were restricted to the two categories of nuclear weapons, the NST were to incorporate under one umbrella those weapons, plus the question of outer space. This is the format which prevails today.

Two months later in March 1985 Mikhail Gorbachev became General-Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

In August 1985 the Third Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of nuclear weapons took place in Geneva. It was seen as vital to Australia's interest that this central instrument of the non-proliferation regime be reviewed successfully. The Second Review Conference, five years earlier, had broken down without any agreed result. A second breakdown was widely regarded as potentially disastrous.

The review process was fraught. It reflected continuing reaction, especially by non-aligned states, to the silence of the first two years of the Reagan Administration, the INF deployments and the failure of the INF/START negotiations. This was notwithstanding that the NST negotiations had commenced a few months earlier. The review conference also proved to be an arena to which the ongoing conflict between Iran and Iraq was extended.

In the event the Third Review Conference was concluded successfully with the production of a consensus document. It is widely considered, in the international community, that successful conclusion was brought about by Australia not least through the role it played on the nuclear testing issue and in carrying out negotiations between Iran and Iraq.

In November 1985 the Geneva Summit meeting between President Reagan and Secretary-General Gorbachev took place, the first such summit for six years.

At that meeting the basic security perception which has subsequently guided the two superpowers was enunciated:

The sides, having discussed key security issues, and conscious of the special responsibility of the USSR and the US for maintaining peace, have agreed that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought. Recognising that any conflict between the USSR and the US could have catastrophic consequences, they emphasised the importance of preventing any war between them, whether nuclear or conventional. They will not seek to achieve military superiority.

They also agreed to accelerate the work at their negotiations directed to:

Preventing the arms race in space and to terminate it on earth, to limit and reduce nuclear arms and enhance stability.

The principal of 50% reductions in the nuclear arms of the United States and the Soviet Union as well as the idea of the interim INF agreement was noted.

Just over a year later in October 1986 the President and the General-Secretary met at Reykjavik. At that meeting they discussed the possibility of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons but at the last moment recoiled from that quantum leap. They did however reaffirm the need for an INF Treaty and the principal of 50% reductions in strategic offensive arms, as a first step.

A year later in December 1987 the INF agreement was signed. It constituted the first nuclear disarmament agreement which would involve the total elimination of a whole class of nuclear weapons.

At the same time the United States and the Soviet Union agreed to resume negotiations on nuclear testing. Those negotiations will involve, as a first step, the ratification of the Threshold Test Ban Treaty and the Peaceful Nuclear Explosions Treaty and then be followed by the negotiation of further intermediate limitations on nuclear testing, leading to the ultimate objective of the complete cessation of nuclear testing, as part of an effective disarmament process.

Since that time the NST process has continued and the President and the General-Secretary have met twice, first in Washington and then in Moscow. On each occasion they have reaffirmed the principles under which they will maintain security, the goals of the NST and, the need for both the elimination of chemical weapons and the maintenance of an effective nuclear non-proliferation regime.

What I have just recorded briefly is a chronology of events which have, to a good extent, taken place in negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union. But they are also events in which Australia has been involved. They illustrate that there has been a broad identity between Australia's disarmament priorities and those of the two most heavily armed states. But there have been some important differences.

During the past six years Australian disarmament policy has had six main elements.

First, an end to the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament. We have repeatedly put our case to Washington and Moscow on the need for them to negotiate significant measures of nuclear disarmament. We cannot sit at the table with them. We have no nuclear weapons. We have nothing to trade at that table. But we are involved daily in nuclear arms control through our membership of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. For this reason as well as the fact that any nuclear catastrophe would affect us we have insisted that action on nuclear disarmament is an important element of our relationship with each of them.

Two months ago in his first statement at the General Assembly of the United Nations, Foreign and Trade Minister Evans reiterated Australia's view of its right to be involved in the business of nuclear disarmament:

But nuclear disarmament and arms control are not matters exclusively for those great powers which currently possess nuclear weapons. For if there is a nuclear conflict, it is not just the peoples of the nuclear weapon states who will suffer. The peoples of the world will be devastated. As the potential victims of nuclear catastrophe, the peoples of all nations have the right to demand real progress and the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons. They have the right to demand that the nuclear arms race not take new forms, including its spread into outer space.

Some would hasten to assert that in a world where power is supreme and in which power is defined militarily, there is not the slightest reason why either the United States or the Soviet Union should pay Australia any heed on nuclear disarmament.

Such a view ignores key realities of the nuclear age. Our view that nuclear disarmament is essential because of the special character of those weapons is essentially shared by the United States and the Soviet Union.

On the occasion of Australia's election to the Security Council in 1985, Prime Minister Hawke said:

Notwithstanding the fact that nuclear weapons have not been used since 1945 it would be foolish in the extreme to stake our future on the perpetual infallibility of nuclear deterrence.

The fact is that our view that the threat of mutual assured

destruction is basically a flawed means of maintaining the peace is rarely disputed.

I have no doubt that our dialogue on nuclear disarmament with both superpowers has been influential and will continue to be so.

I certainly believe that silence on the part of states such as Australia would be neglectful and dangerous.

Finally, in the particular case of the United States there are reasons deriving from our partnership for them to listen carefully to Australia on nuclear disarmament issues. They do so.

Second, we have pursued as a matter of high priority an end to all nuclear testing. In this context Australia has gained leadership of the non-nuclear weapons states which pursue the same goal. For all but one of the past six years we have held Chairmanship of the western group in Geneva on the nuclear testing issue.

Each alternate year at the General Assembly of the United Nations we have coordinated the Australia/New Zealand resolution entitled 'The Urgent Need for a Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty'.

On each of these three occasions our resolution has been adopted by the Assembly with a record majority. The last such occasion was just a few weeks ago.

If the Conference on Disarmament decides to re-establish an ad hoc committee on a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, Australia is the West's candidate for chairmanship of that committee.

The Western mandate for such a committee was written by Australia in 1984. It necessitated a change in United States policy which had to be authorised at the highest level of the United States government. Agreement to the Australian approach was obtained.

In 1984 Mr Hayden proposed the immediate establishment of a global seismological monitoring network, which Australia has pursued both bilaterally and multilaterally. We have been particularly active in the group of Scientific Experts of the Conference on Disarmament where work has proceeded in developing a global system for the international exchange of seismic data to assist in verifying a comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. This

included a global experiment linking 75 seismic stations for two months in 1984. That global experiment was coordinated by Australia. A second and larger global experiment is currently scheduled to take place early in 1990 for which Australia will contribute one of the four international data centres.

We have upgraded our own national seismological capacity through the establishment, in 1986, of the Australian Seismological Centre in Canberra. We can now detect and identify nuclear explosions at most test sites around the world.

Third, Australia has proven a pillar of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and is widely recognised as such.

In this context our role as an exporter of uranium and the development of the Australian National Safeguards system has proven critical.

Given that we possess 30% of the world's uranium it would be incompatible with our status under the NPT, in particular pursuant to Article 4 of that Treaty, if we were to withhold such peaceful international nuclear cooperation.

Fourth, we have played a leading role in work towards the elimination of chemical weapons.

The main negotiation on an international chemical weapons convention takes place in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. Our political and technical input into those negotiations has been a major influence in the production of what is now known as the 'rolling text' of the Convention.

For example, that text includes a schedule of the relevant chemicals. It was drawn up by Australia and after protracted negotiations, accepted.

In addition to these negotiations three years ago we formed 'The Australia Group' which is now participated in by twenty countries. It meets regularly and has the objective of forging common export controls on relevant substances pending the entry into force of the chemical weapons convention.

At the General Assembly of the United Nations it has become of critical importance during the last two years that the Assembly respond to recent use of chemical weapons. In 1987 and 1988 Australia developed and sought consensus on such a resolution. In both cases the negotiations were extraordinarily

difficult. In both cases consensus was achieved.

With regard to chemical weapons use there has also been the need for the Secretary-General of the United Nations to investigate charges of use in the Iran/Iraq context. For this purpose he has assembled a team of chemical experts. One of those experts has been supplied by Australia.

Fifth, the prevention of an arms race in outer space has also been a part of Australia's agenda which we have pursued in our direct discussions with the superpowers, at the Conference on Disarmament and, the General Assembly of the United Nations.

It is not without significance that we are one of the major allies of the United States which has steadfastly refused to endorse the concept of the Strategic Defense Initiative. Also, the government was and remains convinced that the continued integrity of the ABM Treaty is vital to the prospects of negotiating stabilizing reductions in the strategic nuclear forces.

We have also made clear to the Soviet Union the same general concerns and our specific concerns about its counterpart SDI programs.

Beyond this we have insisted that there should be no arms race in outer space. The arms race we have seen on earth is enough.

Sixth, we have taken a new departure on the issue of international arms transfers and the international arms trade generally. The first thing that can be said of this stance is that it has been by no means popular. But the facts with respect to the impact of such trade on both security and economy are clear. We have steadfastly asserted that these facts need to be addressed by major arms exporters and importers, some of the latter of which are developing countries with major economic and financial problems, and by the international community generally.

Opposition to this initiative including at the United Nations has been strong but at the current session of the General Assembly we succeeded for the first time in having a resolution adopted under which the Secretary-General would commence a process of examining and reporting to governments on the nature of, and problems raised by, international arms transfers.

What can be said of what has clearly been a relatively ambitious Australian agenda. This question can be posed objectively but is perhaps especially relevant given the fact of the fairly entrenched Australian tradition of self-deprecation especially with regard to actions by us 'overseas' - the generic term for everywhere else when one comes from an island.

I suggest that at least three basic points can be made, objectively.

First, all of the policy goals outlined above are clearly and intrinsically consistent with the national security interests of Australia.

Second, it follows that active pursuit of those goals should form part of the substance of Australian policy, diplomacy and action within the international community.

Third, it is clear however that the pursuit of such policies has required the establishment of a role for Australia different from that which has characterised our past national policy and attitude towards both allies and others.

This new role has been characterised by an unprecedented degree of independence and a higher degree of determination and self-reliance than was the case in the past.

Having said this, there were moments in the past where Australia showed a great deal of self-reliance and self-respect in dealing with large international phenomena.

The stances of Hughes at the Versailles Peace Conference and Evatt at the San Francisco Conference on the Charter of the United Nations were cases in point. But there were more recent and contrasting experiences in our history. For example, Menzies over the Suez Crisis and Holt with respect to Vietnam.

There may be argument about such simple contrasts or possibly simplistic interpretations of them. But in each case what has surely been at issue was the potential conflict we have always faced between the pursuit of our identified national interest, on the one hand, and the perhaps more enduring over-arching idea in our history that Australia is always potentially, as Malcolm Fraser once said, 'naked and defenceless', leading to the idea that we must never be without an alliance with a great power and that we must do nothing to offend that great power, on the other.

In my experience of the last six years in the field of our work in disarmament the conflict between the pursuit of our identified national interests and our alliance relationship has virtually disappeared.

If there has been an over-arching idea it has in fact been that not only is such a conflict unnecessary but certainly undesirable.

In the pursuit of our disarmament policies, our agenda, objectively determined by our national interest, has been broadly similar to that of the United States. Indeed the citation given earlier from the ANZUS communique of July 1983 could even be taken as demonstrating that the reverse has also been true.

Both of us are determined to deal with the problem posed by nuclear weapons. Both of us want to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapon states. Both of us want to be rid of chemical weapons.

We have differences of approach to the issues of bringing about an end to nuclear testing and the role of the military or non-military utilisation of outer space.

We have differences on the new agenda item on international arms transfers, an item put on the international agenda by Australia. But no-one is saying it is not important.

Another issue on which I believe we have been influential in both Washington and Moscow, and which is of central importance to the long term prospects for an expanding regime of arms control and disarmament agreements is that of transparency and openness. We have consistently and forcefully put to the Soviet Union - including at the highest level - that its traditional obsession with secrecy was a basic obstacle to progress and, indeed, a significant contributing factor to the intensity of the central arms race. Similarly, we have encouraged the United States in its public pronouncements, to highlight the manner in which Soviet secrecy has intensified the conservative assumptions on which it has based its own decisions on its security requirements. We have done this, again, in order to increase openness. The transformation that has and is taking place on this front is remarkable and deeply encouraging.

The Treaty of Rarotonga, which was an initiative of the present Australian government, entered into force on 11 December

1986. The Treaty established the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone which has helped to ensure that the South Pacific does not become a theatre for nuclear competition and confrontation. It continues to earn recognition as a significant arms control measure and to be welcomed by the international community as an important step in global and regional efforts to prevent nuclear proliferation.

The Treaty was opened for signature by the South Pacific forum countries on 6 August 1985, the 40th anniversary of the first use of nuclear weapons. It constitutes a genuinely collective effort by the members of the South Pacific Forum to address their deeply felt and long-standing concerns about nuclear testing, the ocean dumping of nuclear waste and the horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons. It commits the parties to important obligations in those areas. The Treaty also reflects, in the words of the preamble, the determination of the people of the South Pacific

That the Bounty and beauty of the land and sea in their region shall remain the heritage of their peoples and their descendants in perpetuity to be enjoyed by all in peace.

The Treaty of Rarotonga has not been entirely easy to manage within our alliance relationship. But our insistence upon it has not harmed that relationship.

More widely I believe firmly that there has been a recognition in Washington and in its own way shared by Moscow that countries like Australia can pursue policies and seek objectives in the field of disarmament that elude them, precisely because they are superpowers.

We are occasionally asked by our ally to take initiatives which are not open to them because they recognise that in the wider international community they are 'tainted' by their great power status. Our response to such requests is never measured in mere alliance terms. Our own credibility would be harmed if we were seen as merely the messenger.

There have been instances too where the policies of other nuclear weapons such as China have been influenced by the points of view we have put to them.

For example, the Chinese have told us that it was partly as a consequence of representations we made to them in 1985 that they decided to cease atmospheric tests of nuclear weapons and to

participate in any further negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a Comprehensive nuclear Test Ban Treaty.

The fact is that our alliance with the United States is in better shape than it has ever been in spite of the fact that, or perhaps precisely because of the fact that the areas of agreement and disagreement are more clearly defined and better understood than they have ever been before.

There is a greater measure of mutual respect. There is recognition that the way ahead is not served by a world made up of clones.

I remember very well my first contacts, in 1983, with Ken Adelman the then Head of the United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency and with Richard Perle the then Policy Supremo of the United States Defense Department.

Both made it clear to me, in their peculiar ways, that they thought something akin to a communist or at least a fellow traveller government had been elected in Canberra. In both cases the discussions were heated. I remember them with possible affection but certainly with great interest.

A few years later it was made very clear to us that because of our disarmament policies and our active pursuit of them the United States, while it disagreed on a number of aspects, found our discussions about the most relevant and useful discussions they held with anyone with the exception of those they held with the Soviet Union. This remains the case today.

In addition to our discussions with the United States and the very real issues of alliance management raised by our disarmament policies, we have during the last six years established a regular annual process of in-depth bilateral disarmament discussion with the Soviet Union, China, Japan, Canada and New Zealand.

If it was our intention to ensure that Australia was moved from the position of a relatively mute follower in the field of disarmament into that of an active interlocutor and a stable state able to forge practical results then this has been achieved.

There have been three absolutely fundamental reasons for what some might consider the curiosity of Australia having become clearly influential in the field of disarmament:

First, the quality of Australia's policies. The government has developed policies which are clear, intellectually respectable because they have taken cognisance of relevant realities and have been backed-up by sound research and data.

Second, the government has been prepared to allocate the specific resources required for the performance of specific tasks in disarmament, both at home and in the wider international community.

Third, we have pursued our policies with determination.

At the beginning of this paper, I said I would look back into the past and then consider the future. I now turn to the future.

The first and probably the most significant operational assumption that should be made is that the United States/Soviet Union process of arms control negotiation will continue under a Bush Administration and, presumably, under a Gorbachev Administration in the Soviet Union.

In my view Australian policy will need to continue to have, as a major objective, active diplomacy with both of those states directed to seeking to ensure that their process of nuclear arms limitation and reduction continues.

It will also be important for us to continue to ensure that the space regime, in particular the ABM Treaty, does not blow apart and that fanciful and/or dangerous ideas for the utilisation of space wither.

It will be essential to continue to assert that all humanity is deeply threatened by the number and nature of nuclear weapons systems that have been brought into existence.

I leave aside what I consider to be the morally indefensible notion that global security and stability can only be assured by the threat of mutually assured destruction.

The possibility of accident or criminality or insanity or both and the reality of the climatic effects of any significant use of nuclear weapons reinforces the need for us to be rid of those weapons.

As we proceed in the process of nuclear disarmament it should be an important Australian objective to ensure that it is widened beyond the weapons system of the United States and the Soviet Union. The other nuclear weapons states must be brought into that process and at the earliest viable moment.

Another major priority must continue to be the conclusion of a universal convention ridding us of chemical weapons. This convention is within our grasp and President Bush committed himself to its earliest possible conclusion including during the recent United States election campaign.

This convention will be the largest and most detailed arms control and disarmament Treaty ever constructed. The safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency, which regulates the international fuel cycle is its antecedent and is itself extensive and complex. But the Chemical Weapons Treaty and its associated institutions will put the nuclear regime into the shade.

But we have no alternative. Chemicals are not only vital to the world's industry but also its agriculture. Thus their existence is not only an East/West problem but very distinctly a North/South problem. It must not be permitted to be the case that where chemicals are made and used for benign purposes this will automatically bring the possibility of chemical weapons being made.

In this context, Prime Minister Hawke's initiative, as a consequence of which Australia has commenced a dialogue with our neighbours in Asia and the Pacific on the chemical weapons issue, is proving to be a unique and constructive addition to international efforts designed to produce a universal chemical weapons convention.

As indicated above, Australia has already played a major part in work towards this convention. We can and must continue to play that part in bringing this important international agreement to conclusion. It must be recognised that this will require the commitment by government of significant human and material resources.

Another major objective must be to seek to keep up the pressure towards ensuring that the arms race on earth is not transplanted to outer space. There are already at least twelve states which have launch and/or space capability. Utilisation of space grows daily in its importance for communications and

economic purposes. It has also contributed to the maintenance of stability in the nuclear age. But it could so easily go awry. This can be prevented but only if states like Australia insist on drawing a line on the uses to which outer space should be put.

There is a proposal for a world space organisation under which international cooperation on the utilisation of space would be organised. This idea is in its infancy but it has a direct parallel with the International Atomic Energy Agency's work on the utilisation of atomic energy.

Some say that the idea of a world space organisation is a good one but is an idea whose time has not come. Perhaps Australia should help make that time arrive.

I have referred earlier to Australia's action in placing on the international agenda the issue of international arms transfers. This is an issue to which I believe we and the world community should give increasing attention.

The facts are multifarious and devastating. To use just two examples, between 1975 and 1985 when developing countries accumulated massive debt, presumably for development purposes, in fact 35% of the debt was spent on the purchase of arms. At present, arms purchases by developing countries exceed the amount they receive in development assistance.

Again, speaking at the current session of the General Assembly, Foreign and Trade Minister Evans said:

The quest for greater security through higher and higher levels of conventional arms is only too well known to us all. The international conference on disarmament and development provided ample evidence. It is a simple proposition that more arms do not equal greater security. They feed the appetite of instability and the coffers of those who choose to supply arms at levels that are well beyond those needed for self-defence.

The idea that political or foreign policy problems can be solved by throwing arms at them is clearly empty but equally clearly the issue of arms transfers is difficult to solve on a national or bilateral basis. This subject is one which should be addressed by the United Nations, by the world community as a whole, with a view to developing sensible rules for the regulation of the international transfer of arms in both its overt and covert forms. Australia can continue to take a lead in

this field.

There is also the more nebulous but very real area of what has come to be called non-military threats to security. I am speaking of the threats that know no national borders - the depletion of the ozone layer, the warming effect, the international narcotics trade, the development gap, threats to health such as those posed by AIDS, racism, ethnic dislocation. In each of these cases and there are others, it is true that expenditure on arms reduces our ability to allocate resources to the solution of the problems involved and/or exacerbates those problems.

Equally if not more important, the essentially universal preoccupation with military security has inhibited international cooperation in identifying and responding collectively to these non-military challenges to security.

By mentioning the concept of non-military threats to security I am not seeking to depart from the central subject of a paper on Australia and disarmament. Instead I am offering additional reasons why any rational country, like our own, should be concerned about bringing expenditure on arms under control and seeking to change the extent to which states rely upon military solutions to global problems. Simply, a good number of the problems we will face in the future are not of a military nature and cannot be solved by military means but will pose no less a threat to national security than is posed by arms.

Finally, there is a problem of major significance to Australia and others which we will face in the next five years. This is the problem of the continuing prevention of the spread of nuclear weapons.

Addressing this problem at the General Assembly, Minister Evans said:

One of the few things that has given the people of the world some confidence that nuclear catastrophe will not occur is that almost all the nations of the world have undertaken not to acquire nuclear weapons. Australia considers the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which embraces this commitment, to be perhaps the single most important arms control agreement in existence. We consider its preservation to be of paramount importance to peace and security.

We understand and have shared the frustrations many

countries feel at the glacial pace of progress towards nuclear disarmament, but we do not believe this frustration is well-served by bringing into question the Non-Proliferation Treaty itself. Does any nation really believe that its security, or the safety of the world, would be served by a world where yet more states have nuclear weapons? Further nuclear proliferation would bring about an even more desperately dangerous world than the one we now inhabit.

An area of the world in which major pressures towards nuclear weapons proliferation is felt is South Asia - an area of more than special concern to Australia.

It is also an area with more than a fair share of sources of regional suspicion and tension, and major power involvement.

To come directly to a point and perhaps by way of contrast with what I have cited from Minister Evans immediately above, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi speaking at the Third Special Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations devoted to disarmament, in June 1988, said:

There is another danger that is even worse. Left to ourselves, we would not want to touch nuclear weapons. But when tactical considerations, in the passing play of great power rivalries, are allowed to take precedence over the imperatives of nuclear non-proliferation with what leeway are we left.

I suggest that among perhaps many things, Prime Minister Gandhi was giving voice to what is in fact the widespread concern that an essential part of the compact underlying the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty has not been honoured. This is that the pledge of non-nuclear weapons states never to acquire those weapons would be matched by significant measures of nuclear disarmament by the nuclear weapons states.

I leave it to others to interpret what Mr Gandhi was suggesting India's future national policy might be if this situation continues to prevail.

Members of the NPT have commenced the process of preparing for the Fourth NPT Review Conference to be held in August 1990.

It will be the penultimate review under the terms of the Treaty. The Treaty was done until 1995. It can be renewed

thereafter, or not. The Fifth Review Conference in 1995 will constitute the moment of decision on that issue.

I will make three points:

First, Australia has a vital interest in the maintenance of a viable regime preventing the spread of nuclear weapons.

Second, the 1968 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of nuclear weapons has been the bedrock of our success in restraining such nuclear proliferation for twenty years.

Third, the Treaty is under a not inconsiderable threat.

It would be a supreme tragedy if at the very moment when, at last, real progress in nuclear disarmament seems within our grasp, when those who hold hideous quantities and qualities of nuclear weapons are moving towards nuclear disarmament, the ground under our feet were to crumble and the spectre of widespread nuclear weapons proliferation, which we buried in 1968, were to surface again.

This does not have to be the case but action of a possibly far reaching kind will be required, at a conceptual, political and diplomatic level if we are to prevent this.

So, my main proposal for Australia in disarmament, between now and 1995, is that we make a major commitment to doing whatever we can, in cooperation with others to ensure that at the notional end-date of the NPT the international community continues to function within a viable nuclear non-proliferation regime - whatever its form.

To this end, policies which are merely reactive or defensive will not be effective. We need strategic thinking. We need to be prepared to try to answer concerns, the substance of which may not be ours or which we do not share. We may need to enter into vigorous argument with our friends or call onto the table the cards of those who are not necessarily our friends.

Why should Australia involve itself in a major and visible way in such a difficult enterprise?

The narrow answer is that it will be in our interest to do so, in terms of our national security.

The wider and, in reality, more compelling answer is that

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few others can do it with equal credibility and, thus, possibility for success, as could Australia.

Strange, but true.

Australia and disarmament, during the last six years has been an extraordinary and new experience in Australian foreign policy.

I believe it will prove to have been, merely, a beginning.

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