



## PRIME MINISTER

Statement to the Parliament by the Prime Minister: Arms Control, Disarmament and Australia - 6 June 1984

Mr Speaker

On this day 40 years ago, allied forces landed on the beaches of Normandy to launch the final phase of the destruction of Nazism. Within a year, those forces, Soviet forces to the East, and the resistance movements in the occupied countries had liberated the people of Europe and brought peace to a devastated continent.

Shortly afterwards, the allies went on to achieve victory in the Pacific and so brought an end to the carnage of the Second World War. But that end was only achieved after the victims of Hiroshima and Nagasaki had opened humanity's eyes to the existence of a new and uniquely destructive instrument of war - the nuclear weapon.

Since the end of the Second World War, we have witnessed great changes in international affairs, the most positive of which has been the virtual end of colonialism and the emergence to independence and nationhood of hundreds of millions of people, many of them in the Asia-Pacific region.

Certain essentials of the post-war system, however, continue to form the basis of the present world order. The United States and the USSR, the two powers which emerged pre-eminent from the war, have gone on to achieve unchallenged status as superpowers. Moreover, the system has managed for four decades to avoid a further outbreak of global conflict or open warfare between the major powers.

We can all be thankful that since 1945 nuclear weapons have not again been fired in war.

But if the peace has been kept between East and West, the East-West relationship has been at the best of times uneasy and difficult, and frequently tense and dangerous. Stability in Europe has not been matched in many parts of the developing world, where local wars have caused great misery to millions of people. Repression and the denial of human rights persist in many countries. And for forty years the peoples of the world have lived with the nightmare of nuclear weapons, whose number and destructive power have grown enormously.

East-West relations at present are at a very low ebb. Arms control negotiations between the super powers are in great difficulty. Their relationship is permeated with suspicion. The rhetoric surrounding it is potentially very dangerous.

At the same time, the international arms race is proceeding apace at the staggering cost of some 700 billion dollars annually or well over a million dollars a minute.

This represents a scandalous waste of resources and human ingenuity. None of us needs to be told how the world, particularly the poorer countries, could benefit from a redirection of this military expenditure into peaceful and productive development.

Some 80 per cent of the expenditure on arms is on conventional weapons. In the thermonuclear age, we can easily overlook the horrifying destructive power which now hides behind that anodyne term. The bloodshed in the Gulf War and the destruction of sophisticated modern warships in the Falklands war should remind us of its sinister implications.

But above all, it is the rapid technological development and build-up of nuclear weapons which, combined with the deterioration in East-West relations, has quite understandably created the current mood of anxiety and anger among ordinary men and women around the world as well as here in Australia.

On Palm Sunday, a few weeks ago, some 250,000 Australians marched in our cities to support the cause of peace, disarmament and arms control. They marched to express the increasing concern felt about the threat of nuclear war.

Those who marched in Australia joined the countless others who have marched recently in Western Europe and the United States. There is also no doubt that, if the Governments in the USSR and Eastern Europe permitted genuine freedom of expression, there would be millions on the streets there, as well.

The concern of the marchers for peace, the strength of their feelings, and the very weight of their numbers must be taken into account by all Governments.

I have made it clear that we see a very sharp distinction between nuclear weapons, which we abhor, and nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, which we support, and I shall return to this theme in the course of this statement.

But we certainly understand and identify with the aspirations of the Australian people for peace and disarmament and these aspirations inspire our policies.

Academician Andrei Sakharov, a key figure in the development of Soviet nuclear weapons, whose present plight was the subject of an important motion passed unanimously by this House last week, is an outspoken advocate of the need for arms control agreement between the superpowers.

Pointing out that thermonuclear war cannot be considered a continuation of politics by other means, according to the Clausewitz <sup>formula</sup> ~~former~~, but rather a means of nuclear suicide, Dr Sakharov has identified the consequences of nuclear conflict in stark terms which will move concerned people on both sides of the ideological divide, as follows:

"A complete destruction of cities, industry, transport and systems of education, a poisoning of fields, water and air by radioactivity, a physical destruction of the larger part of mankind, poverty, barbarism, a return to savagery, and a genetic degeneracy of the survivors under the impact of radiation, a destruction of the material and information basis of civilisation".

Although Australia might appear remote from the areas of the globe where any nuclear war might mainly be fought, it would be unrealistic to suppose that Australia would not be profoundly affected by such a conflict.

The Government believes that it is therefore in Australia's vital interests, as a country which wants both to survive and to be a constructive member of the international community, to do all we can do to minimise the prospects for nuclear conflict.

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We have a modest and realistic evaluation of our influence on the super-powers and the other major powers but we will use it whenever we can. The recent overseas visit by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, who will speak in this debate, is an effective example of what we are about.

The nuclear weapons states alone do not have the right to determine the destiny of mankind. The fact that their calculations - or indeed their miscalculations - could have terrible consequences for the rest of us gives us the responsibility before our people to be heard on these fundamental issues.

In approaching this responsibility, the Government unequivocally rejects the attractive but unrealistic idea that unilateral disarmament would be an effective way to bring about an end to the arms race.

We proceed from the fact that Australia is an aligned nation and that our security is supported by co-operative measures under the auspices of ANZUS. The Labor Party takes pride in the fact that the foundations of our alliance with the United States were laid by the great John Curtin, when this country faced the gravest threat to its survival in 1941.

As an independent ally of the United States, Australia last year initiated a thorough and successful review of ANZUS. We are satisfied that the Treaty continues to support our fundamental security interests, without absolving Australia from the primary obligation to provide for our own national defence. Honourable Members will recall that Secretary of State Shultz commented that the review had been an excellent idea and most worthwhile.

Our membership of the alliance in no way inhibits us from pursuing the issues of arms control and disarmament. On the contrary, as my colleague, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, said on 18 January 1984:

"We work unabashedly through international fora for arms control and disarmament, nuclear and conventional. Our involvement with the United States gives us much greater claim to be heard on these matters internationally.

There is much greater weight behind our declarations on this subject precisely because we are sensible enough to support the only effective nuclear restraint system at the moment, deterrence, but intelligent enough to worry about the escalation, the excessive armouries, to want something better and to work for it openly and energetically."

We intend to continue to pursue these issues vigorously with both super powers. If allies of the United States do not press their concerns about arms control on the USSR, the Soviet Leaders may be tempted to sit back and permit one-sided pressure to build up in Washington. Mr Hayden's vigorous advocacy of these issues in Moscow and the response he was given by Mr Gromyko demonstrate that our alliance with the United States is no barrier to Australia's voice being heard in the Soviet Union.

I and senior Ministers of the Government have held discussions on these matters with President Reagan and other leading members of the Administration. We will take these discussions further with Secretary of State Shultz when he visits Canberra next month.

Arms control was a major item on the agenda of my discussions with Premier Zhao in Peking in February. I have raised the matter with President Mitterrand and Mr Hayden has done the same in his recent talks with French Foreign Minister Cheysson.

Since coming to power, this Government has given a priority to arms control and disarmament issues unmatched by any of its predecessors. We have done this, as I have indicated, because of our concern at the level of international tension in recent years, our appreciation of the difficulties bedevilling relations between the superpowers and our recognition of the very legitimate anxieties which these developments have aroused among the Australian people.

The Government believes that we should not allow ourselves to be overwhelmed by a sense of global pessimism or imminent disaster.

We are aware that the issues posed by the politics and technology of arms control and disarmament are, extraordinarily complex. There are no 'quick fixes' available. Arms control and disarmament cannot be imposed on any nation, let alone the nuclear powers. Progress can only be achieved through agreement between the countries concerned.

The Government believes that what is required are realistic, concrete and balanced measures that have at their heart a recognition of the national security interests involved.

We are guided by three basic principles:

- security for all states at the lowest possible level of armament
- stability of the nuclear balance; and
- adequate verification arrangements.

As a member of every global disarmament body, Australia is promoting treaties to end nuclear testing and to ban chemical weapons, and measures to prevent an arms race in outer space. We are also doing what we can do to strengthen measures against the spread of nuclear weapons.

For countries such as Australia, there is no substitute for the hard slog of multilateral diplomacy designed to engage the interests and support of the superpowers. The appointment of Australia's first Ambassador for Disarmament has significantly improved the effectiveness of our efforts in this regard.

The Government's policy framework was laid down on 22 November 1983 when Cabinet took the following policy decisions on arms control and disarmament:

- (i) to promote measures to halt and reverse the nuclear arms race;

- (ii) to uphold the international nuclear non-proliferation treaty;
- (iii) to promote a comprehensive and verifiable ban on nuclear testing;
- (iv) to develop the concept of a nuclear free zone in the South Pacific;
- (v) to support the achievement of an agreement to ban chemical weapons;
- (vi) to support the process of negotiation and the achievement of balanced and verifiable arms control agreements;
- (vii) to take an active role in pursuing arms control and disarmament measures wherever possible;
- (viii) to affirm Australia's readiness to join a consensus to hold an international conference on the Indian ocean zone of peace question.

Since coming to office the Government has taken steps to strengthen Australia's public and private institutional capacity, to ensure that its commitment to peace and disarmament will be backed by a high degree of professional competence.

I have mentioned our appointment of an Ambassador for Disarmament, whose role is to represent Australia in international forums, especially the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. Within the Department of Foreign Affairs there has been a major strengthening of capacity to handle disarmament issues through the deployment of additional personnel to the Disarmament and Arms Control and the Nuclear Policy areas.

The Government attaches great importance to the analytical and creative role of academic institutions.

Mr Hayden announced in March 1984 that decisions had been taken to provide funds on a seven year basis to enable a peace research centre to be established at the Australian National University.

Its purpose will be to provide a nucleus for serious and scholarly research into the whole field of peace, disarmament and arms control. Australia has also contributed financially to the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) which aims to raise the level of research into disarmament and arms control problems.

In addition the Government has made a voluntary contribution to the World Disarmament Campaign, the purpose of which is to inform, educate and to generate public understanding and support for the objectives of the United Nations in the area of disarmament.

In 1986, which has been designated by the United Nations as the International Year of Peace, the Government intends to commemorate the Year with a program of appropriate activities.

Of the many initiatives we have taken in the field of arms control, I draw particular attention to our efforts on behalf of the Non-proliferation Treaty and a comprehensive test ban treaty.

I stress again, as I did when tabling the ASTEC Report, the particular and fundamental significance which the Government attaches to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. We regard the NPT as the most important multilateral non-proliferation and arms control agreement in existence. We will continue to do everything in our power to strengthen international adherence to the Treaty.

In the House on 31 May, I drew attention to the ASTEC Report's findings that, if international tensions are to be reduced and the prospects of a peaceful global environment enhanced, the importance of national and international energy security cannot be overemphasised. The Report noted that disruptions in the supply of resources of any sort have been a cause of international tension and, through human history, have led to war. The Inquiry concluded that Australia, through being a reliable, long-term supplier of uranium, is in a position to contribute significantly to international energy security.

The Report expressed the concern that we must all share that the prevention of nuclear war is of the greatest importance to all humanity. It also pointed out that should a country decide to embark on a nuclear weapons program, it was most unlikely to use a civil reactor to do so for technical and economic reasons.

It concluded that Australia would best be able to make a significant contribution to non-proliferation and world peace if it were actively involved in the nuclear fuel cycle.

In this context, let me recall for Honourable Members what academician Sakharov, whose credentials as an advocate for arms control and disarmament are, as I have said, exemplary, said in 1977 about the civil use of nuclear power:

"It is difficult to explain to a nonspecialist (although it is actually true) that the nuclear reactor of a nuclear power station is nothing like an atomic bomb ..... The development of nuclear technology has proceeded with much greater attention to the problems of safety techniques and preservation of the environment than the development of such branches of technology as metallurgy, coke chemistry, mining, chemical industry, coal power stations, modern transportation, chemicalization of agriculture, etc. Therefore, the present situation in nuclear power is relatively good from the point of view of safety and possible effect on the environment...."

The House may recall that, when the great debate took place in this country at the beginning of the last decade on whether Australia should subscribe to the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty, opponents of the Treaty argued that we would need a nuclear weapons capacity to repel the survivors of an atomic war in the Northern hemisphere.

To the great credit and benefit of this country, that argument did not prevail. The Coalition Government signed the Treaty in 1970 and the previous Labor Government moved rapidly to ratify it in January 1973.

I now reiterate that this Labor Government categorically rejects any nuclear weapons option for Australia.

Another of Australia's primary objectives in contributing to curbing the nuclear arms race has been to promote a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty (CTBT) which would outlaw all nuclear testing by all states in all environments for all time.

Australia has been active on this issue both in the United Nations and in the Conference on Disarmament, and in bilateral discussions with the nuclear weapons states.

The conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty would help to put strong pressure on France to cease its testing program in the Pacific. A universally adhered-to treaty would also help inhibit the spread of nuclear weapons by making it impossible to test nuclear explosive devices - including the so-called peaceful nuclear explosions. It would also help to limit the development of new nuclear weapons and the improvement of existing nuclear weapons.



In addition to advocating the test ban in international meetings and in bilateral exchanges with other governments, Australia has played a major role in seeking to solve procedural obstacles to the re-convening of a committee of the Conference on Disarmament on this issue.

To this end Australia and New Zealand sponsored a resolution at the United Nations General Assembly in 1983 with the aim of promoting a formulation for a mandate for the committee, that would receive general agreement. This resolution achieved a large measure of support and, unlike competing resolutions on the same topic by Mexico and the Soviet Union, it attracted no negative votes.

Our efforts had some influence in the encouraging development that the United States abstained on this resolution, after voting against a similar resolution the year before.

Notwithstanding a number of major difficulties which have to date prevented agreement, we are continuing patiently and assiduously to pursue this objective and to seek to build on the modest progress already achieved.

In further support of the test ban objective, an Australian expert from the Bureau of Mineral Resources is participating in the Group of Seismic Experts which is considering questions relevant to a global scientific network to monitor a test ban. Australia's geographic situation means we have an important potential role in such a global network.

A major purpose of our efforts in the multilateral disarmament field is to bring influence to bear on the bilateral relationship of the United States and the USSR.

Australia has consistently urged the United States and the Soviet Union to seek agreements to limit and reduce their nuclear stockpiles and has supported their negotiations to this end: the Strategic Arms Reduction talks (START) and the talks on intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF). It was a great disappointment to the Government when these negotiations were suspended by the Soviet Union and the Government has expressed on many occasions its hope that they will be resumed as soon as possible. Australia is not of course a party to these negotiations but the Government is doing what it can to encourage resumption of these negotiations and to break down the barriers of mistrust and suspicion.

In the Government's view, adequate and effective provision for verification is a crucial precondition for progress in arms control negotiations. Another fundamental requirement is the maintenance of effective and stable deterrence between the superpowers and the contribution which that makes to a climate of confidence. Without this there can be no progress.

There are special reasons why our role in this is and will remain something more than modest. We contribute positively to verification and stable and effective deterrence. Our standing in these matters derives not only from our policy commitments and objectives but from the presence of, and the important role played by, the Australian-United States Joint Defence Facilities on our soil.

At its highest levels, the United States Administration has been consulted on and has acceded to issuance of the following statement:

Australia-United States Joint Defence Facilities

Since coming to office the Government has determined to act upon its undertaking to provide the public with a statement on the general purpose and functions of the defence facilities we operate jointly with ~~our~~ <sup>our</sup> American ally.

Successive Governments have maintained secrecy about the facilities at Pine Gap and Nurrungar. This sometimes arouses concern about the sorts of activities we might be becoming involved in, and about possible dangers to our security. Our Party's Platform, therefore, calls on the Government to make known to the public the general purpose and functions of the facilities and any change to these.

When the Ministers for Defence and Foreign Affairs were in Washington in July last year they took the opportunity to raise these matters with the US Secretary of Defence, Mr Weinberger, and relevant authorities in the Pentagon.

We are concerned that such a statement should not damage our own and our allies' interests and accordingly the Government does not intend to act unilaterally and in disregard of international assurances about preservation of secrecy given by our predecessors for over a decade. Nevertheless, there is a good deal that can be said to provide reassurance to the Australian people.

The facilities are not military bases. There are no combat personnel or combat equipments there, no military stores or workshops, no plant or machinery or laboratories for research, development, production or maintenance of any weapons or combat systems of any type.

Timely knowledge of developments that have military significance is very important and can be critical for the security of the US and its allies, including Australia. Effective deterrence and hence avoidance of conflict depend on this. Similarly, effective measures for military restraint and for the control and reduction of armaments depend upon reliable assessments of military developments. Arms limitation arrangements between the United States and the Soviet Union specifically provide for verification. The general purpose of the facilities that we operate at Nurrungar and Pine Gap with the Americans is to contribute to all of these objectives.

Among the functions performed are the provision of early warning by receiving from space satellites information about missile launches, and the provision of information about the occurrence of nuclear explosions, which assists in nuclear test ban monitoring and supports nuclear non-proliferation measures. Disclosures of other technical functions of the classified facilities would involve damage to both US and Australian interests and cannot be justified.

The purpose and functions of the joint defence facility at North West Cape have already been made public. It is a communications relay station for ships and submarines of the United States Navy and the Royal Australian Navy and serves as a key element in a complex system of communications supporting the global balance. As indicated in the statement which the Minister for Defence tabled in Parliament on 3 November 1983, agreement was reached with the United States Government on new arrangements to ensure that the Australian Government would be able to make timely judgements about the significance for national interest of developments involving North West Cape.

These new arrangements are now in force. The Government is satisfied that Australia's sovereignty in the operation of the joint defence facility at North West Cape is now adequately protected.

Some people express concern about possible risks to our security from these facilities. The Government takes the view that the joint facilities directly contribute to the security that we enjoy every day and that this tangible benefit outweighs the possibility that risks might arise at some future time from our hosting the facilities. For many years our intelligence and defence authorities have assessed the risk of nuclear war as remote and improbable, provided effective deterrence is maintained.

Australians cannot claim the full protection of that deterrence without being willing to make some contribution to its effectiveness. It is important to support stability in the strategic relationship between the superpowers and our co-operation in the joint facilities at North West Cape, Pine Gap and Nurrungar does this.

As to the specific risk of nuclear attack on these facilities in the event of nuclear war it is not possible to be categorical; we cannot enter the minds of possibly hostile foreign military planners. The Government believes that hosting the facilities does bring with it some degree of added risk of nuclear attack. But the maintenance of effective deterrence including through early warning has as its purpose the avoidance of war between the nuclear powers. Such a war would inevitably affect all nations, including Australia, and its avoidance is essential for the security of the Australian people.

The preservation of peace between the nuclear powers has for many years been dependent upon a situation of stable deterrence. Maintaining, and where possible enhancing, the stability of that deterrent relationship is the objective of this Government in these matters. Deterrence can be pursued through any means of convincing a potential aggressor that he would face unacceptable costs, but stability requires discrimination and restraint.

We do not believe there can be a winning side in a nuclear war. The notion of a nuclear first strike designed to disarm an adversary would be destabilizing were it to gain credence.

Nor can there be any assurance that nuclear conflict between the super-powers could be limited. This Government's voice on such matters will be directed towards supporting doctrines which eschew moving beyond the requirements of stable deterrence towards postures more appropriate to waging nuclear war in some limited and controlled way.

While we recognise that in present global circumstances a unilateral move away from a policy of maintaining stable deterrence is not a realistic option, the Australian Government is committed to working for measures to stabilize the strategic balance, on which stable deterrence depends, and to curb arms competition. Through equitable and verifiable measures for arms control and reduction, we seek to limit qualitative improvements in arms and to reduce the forces involved.

The Government does not intend to comment further upon speculation or assertions about the joint facilities at Pine Gap and Nurrungar. Enough has been said, however, to correct some serious misunderstandings and to provide the reassurance that people properly seek.

Finally, let me emphasise again that these facilities are jointly managed and operated by the Australian and American Governments. All functions and activities require, and have, the full knowledge and concurrence of the Australian Government. We monitor this and we are satisfied that the operations of the facilities in no way derogate from Australian sovereignty.

Mr Speaker, as I have indicated, the United States Administration has been consulted on the statement I have just made and has acceded to its issuance. The Government's wish to make this statement met with understanding and co-operation from the U.S. Administration.

This has enabled me to make today to this parliament the most comprehensive public statement on the facilities yet made by an Australian Prime Minister or Minister.

The lack of public information until now on the purposes of the facilities has not assisted public understanding of the vital issues involved. It is to be regretted that the previous Government did not make the necessary effort to see that the Australian people were properly informed. This has helped build up an unwarranted mystique about them and encouraged a tendency in certain sections of the media and elsewhere to discuss Nurrungar and Pine gap in a speculative and provocative manner.

Some Australian groups and individuals call for the closing of the joint defence facilities. The Government recognises many of such calls as being sincerely made. We regard them as misguided but not hostile in intent.

I do not expect that such calls will now cease. But I ask those making them to consider very seriously the implications of what they are demanding. As I have indicated, the removal of the joint facilities would hinder U.S. efforts to maintain effective and stable deterrence and would damage the capacity of the United States for monitoring and verification, so striking a very serious blow at the prospect of arms control agreements between the super-powers. Such a development would dash the hopes of ordinary men and women around the world for peace and disarmament.

Moreover, I draw particular attention to the early warning function mentioned in the statement I have just made, and to the significance of that function for the avoidance of nuclear war. In an uncertain and suspicious international climate, no action should be taken which would reduce stability or increase the risk of war through miscalculation.

Mr Speaker,

As we contemplate the momentous events of 40 years ago, we can be profoundly thankful for the efforts and sacrifices of those who participated in D-Day. They fought for a cause which was incontrovertibly right. They helped create a world which has managed since to avoid the horror of global conflict.

We might also think for a moment of those who had fought with equal bravery in the Great War, believing that that would prove to be the war to end wars. The bloodshed at Gallipoli, in particular, has left an indelible impression on the Australian national consciousness.

We may also recall the indignation and pity which the horrors of that war aroused among the young men who went to fight on the Western Front. The great English poet, Wilfred Owen, notwithstanding his winning the Military Cross a month before he died in battle in 1918 at the age of 25, was a passionate opponent of war. The title of one of his poems, "Anthem for Doomed Youth", sums up the tragedy of that generation.

In letters to his family early in 1917, Owen wrote that "No Man's Land is pockmarked like a body of foulest disease and its odour is the breath of cancer..... No Man's Land under snow is like the face of the moon, chaotic, crater-ridden, uninhabitable, awful, the abode of madness". He described "the universal pervasion of ugliness. Hideous landscapes, vile noises..... everything unnatural, broken, blasted; the distortion of the dead, whose unburiable bodies sit outside the dug-outs all day, all night, the most execrable sights on earth".

That was one poet's vision of the First World War. Should there be a nuclear war, the whole world will be a No Man's Land. There will be no one to sing the anthem for our young generations, if we are unable to prevent global conflict. Such a conflict, which God forbid, would indeed be a war to end war - it would threaten the extinction of humanity.

It is precisely to prevent such a catastrophe that so many Australian people have taken up the cause of peace and disarmament. And it is precisely to achieve the same end that the Government has, from its perspective, developed its policies on arms control and disarmament to which it will continue to devote its highest priority.

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