

## Letter to Julie Bishop re NY Nuclear Weapons Prohibition Meetings June15-July7 NY

Written by John Hallam

Friday, 26 May 2017 15:50 - Last Updated Friday, 26 May 2017 15:56

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### PEOPLE FOR NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT HUMAN SURVIVAL PROJECT BAN NEGOTIATIONS NEW YORK JUNE15-JULY7 2017

#### HIGH – LEVEL MEETING SEPT 2018

#### REDUCING NUCLEAR RISKS

26/5.2017

**Julie Bishop, Minister for Foreign Affairs** Dear Julie Bishop, I am writing yet again to see if I can persuade you to reverse Australia's misguided boycott of the nuclear weapons prohibition negotiations that will take place in New York between 15 June and 7 July, as you are urged by a Senate motion earlier this year, and to take urgent action to reduce nuclear risks at the end of the year and in the Sept2018 High Level meeting.

Australia's boycott serves no practical purpose and achieves nothing good.

While the ban negotiation is correctly seen as a strengthening and an implementation of Art VI of the NPT, our boycott of that negotiation actually puts in doubt our commitment to Art VI, and by doing so weakens the NPT regime. Let me emphasize that if anything weakens the NPT regime it will not be the nuclear Ban negotiations, which are an expression of the core intent of the NPT, but the actions of those governments who refuse to take part in those negotiations.

The ban negotiations do not detract from, or weaken, the incremental steps – some of them of existential importance, notably those that deal with risk reduction – that are needed to actually eliminate nuclear arsenals. Rather they add urgency to those steps. In one or two years, maybe much less depending how smoothly the negotiations progress, nuclear weapons will be illegal for  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the governments of the world. This can only make their elimination by those governments that persist in maintaining nuclear arsenals more urgent.

It has been said by the Australian Government and by some other governments that the elimination of nuclear weapons cannot take place in isolation from the global strategic situation. Indeed so. The current fraught global strategic situation, a situation in which the risk of actual use of nuclear weapons is as great as it has ever been, including in the riskiest parts of the cold war, calls for the elimination of nuclear weapons as a matter of existential urgency. Even more, it calls for the urgent reduction of nuclear war risks. Action by the Australian government on reducing nuclear risks both in the upcoming session of UNGA and in the coming Sept 2018 High Level Meeting on nuclear disarmament would be most welcome.

Nuclear weapons right now constitute the single largest and most urgent and immediate threat

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to human civilization and human survival. This is a risk that 'trumps' mere national self – interest and national security. In any case, there cannot be national survival apart from global human survival.

Those governments that do not participate in the ban negotiation in June/July are playing a breathtakingly destructive and irresponsible role.

Surely Australia, as a responsible member of the community of nations will have the commonsense and decency not to do this.

I urge you to participate no longer in this ill-advised and ill-fated boycott, and to lead the 40 governments that identify with the 'progressive approach' to understand that this approach can succeed best only within the overall framework of a ban, which instills an appropriate sense of urgency to step by step processes on which progress has not been made and steps have not thus far been taken.

I also urge you to take further action to reduce short term nuclear risks both at the upcoming UNGA and in the Sept 2018 High Level Meeting.

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**23 MAY 2017 PEOPLE FOR NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT HUMAN SURVIVAL  
PROJECT PND,  
HUMAN SURVIVAL PROJECT, WELCOME DRAFT TEXT OF BAN TREATY**

**AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT MUST PARTICIPATE IN BAN NEGOTIATIONS**

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People for Nuclear Disarmament and the Human Survival Project, have welcomed the release earlier today (Monday NY time) of the draft text of a treaty whose purpose is to make nuclear weapons illegal.

Somewhere between 2/3 and 3/4 of the governments of the world will be meeting at the UN in New York from 15 June to 7 July to further negotiate, finalise, and adopt the final text of a treaty to ban nuclear weapons, making them illegal.

Australia is boycotting these negotiations. It should be participating in them in good faith.

According to PNDs nuclear disarmament campaigner John Hallam, who will be attending the June15-July7 New York negotiation:

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According to the Australian Government, the adoption of a ban treaty by the overwhelming majority of the Governments of the world, will in some unexplainable way detract from step-by-step approaches that take place either bilaterally or under the aegis of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty.

It is even argued that the ban will somehow weaken the NPT.

This is complete nonsense. The ban will strengthen not weaken the NPT and will 'put a bomb under' efforts to proceed with step by step moves to eliminate nuclear weapons.”

“

In fact, by refusing to attend Australia puts question-marks behind its real commitment to the elimination of nuclear weapons under art VI of the NPT and under repeated declarations from NPT review conferences.”

“

Australia should reconsider and reverse its ban treaty boycott and lead an effort to use the ban treaty to strengthen and radically accelerate the so-called 'progressive' approach – an approach that so far has been characterised mainly by its complete lack of progress.”

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In addition, Australia should add its backing to moves to reduce the risks of inadvertent (or deliberate) nuclear war, which in recent years have spiralled to levels as high or higher than

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those of the most terrifying parts of the cold war.”

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MOTIONS Nuclear Weapons Senator SINGH (Tasmania) (15:58): I, and also on behalf of Senator Ludlam, move:

That the Senate—

(a) notes that:

(i) there are close to 15,000 nuclear weapons in the world today,  
posing a grave threat to all humanity,

(ii) nuclear weapons remain the only weapons of mass destruction not  
yet expressly prohibited under international law,

(iii) the United Nations (UN) will convene a conference from 27 to 31  
March 2017 and 15 June to 7 July 2017 to negotiate a legally binding  
instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total

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elimination,

(iv) the UN General Assembly has encouraged all UN member states to participate in the conference, and (v) Australia, as a state party to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, is legally required to pursue negotiations in good faith for nuclear disarmament;

and

(b) urges the Australian Government to participate constructively in the conference.