CENESS, Moscow

18 November 2010

Russia – Australia Nuclear Cooperation

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INTRODUCTION

• Russia-Australia Nuclear Cooperation Agreement signed 7 September 2007
  - EIF 11 November 2010.

• Replaces 1990 agreement, covered ‘toll processing’ for third countries.

• New NCA broadens relationship between our countries
  - use of Australian uranium in Russian reactors
  - framework for broader cooperation.
AUSTRALIAN NUCLEAR POLICY

• Established 1977 – similar to US, Canada
  - to ensure AONM used for exclusively peaceful purposes.

• Must be treaty-level agreement
  - legally-binding peaceful use commitment
  - consent rights on retransfers, enrichment, reprocessing
  - identifying material and items subject to NCA
  - reports to ASNO, to support ‘tracking’.
Australian policy

• For NNWS party to NPT, IAEA ‘comprehensive’ [fullscope] safeguards apply to all nuclear material.

• For NWS, AONM must be held, processed or used in facilities eligible for IAEA safeguards.
HISTORY OF NCA

• Informal approach 2000 to expand 1990 agreement

• Model suggested, based on ‘programmatic consent’
  - agreed Eligible Facilities List.

• Did not proceed at that time, model used for 2006 Australia/China agreement [eif 2007].

• Formal negotiation of Russia/Australia agreement started December 2006, signed September 2007.

• Eligible Facilities List, with substitution for conversion and some enrichment.
Issues

• Eligible Facilities List, with substitution for conversion and some enrichment
  - not well understood.

• Need for ‘Administrative Arrangements’ [MOU]
  - less than treaty status – delayed by MFA.
FUTURE

• NCA will allow uranium transfers [when MOU completed!]
  - scope for nuclear R&D collaboration [eg Synroc].

• Policy consultations
  - range of topics: NSG, AP as condition of supply, FMCT, Middle East NWFZ, disarmament verification, multinational approaches to NFC, proliferation-resistance, specific cases such as Iran and DPRK.

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Fuel cycle collaboration?

• Current Australian policy prohibits further stages of NFC
  - best opportunity here is collaboration on new international framework for nuclear energy
  - what might this mean in practice?
  - how to minimise proliferation risk?

• Further possibilities speculative
  - policy on nuclear energy could change with CO2 limits, pricing
  - involvement in international fuel cycle centre??