



EMBASSY OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
WELLINGTON NEW ZEALAND

August 15, 2008

Ms. Mary Wareham
ANZCMC Coordinator
200 Wellington Parade
Wellington

Dear Mary,

Thank you very much for your letter of July 24 regarding the recent U.S. policy on cluster munitions. While we share your organization's concern over unintended harm to civilians, the United States believes that cluster munitions remain a legitimate weapon with real military utility. Moreover, we believe that the CCW discussions in Geneva are the proper forum for multilateral engagement on this issue and the US will continue to press ahead in these meetings to address the humanitarian concerns associated with the use of cluster munitions. Decreasing the amount of unexploded ordnance will greatly reduce the potential for accidents involving civilians in post-conflict areas. In my government's opinion, removal of cluster munitions from a country's arsenal will force greater reliance on unitary weapons during combat that could increase civilian casualties and damage to civilian infrastructure.

The US delegation to the CCW talks in Geneva recently reviewed for participating countries the new U.S. policy and the feedback has been largely positive. We do not necessarily see US policy and the Oslo treaty on cluster munitions as being in conflict with one another; rather, they are alternate approaches to addressing this issue.

I regret that my schedule will preclude our meeting on this issue. However, Ms. Peggy McKean from the Mission staff will be pleased to meet with you should you wish to discuss this matter in greater detail.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'W. P. McCormick', written over a light blue horizontal line.

W. P. McCormick
Ambassador