

INDO-US NUCLEAR DEAL AND IMPLICATION ON SOUTH ASIAN SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

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Abstract:-

The Indo-US nuclear deal the agreement is between the two states possessing advanced nuclear technology, both the parties having the benefits and advantages. The purposes of this agreement is to enable full civil nuclear energy cooperation covering nuclear reactors and aspects of the associated nuclear fuel cycle including enrichment and reprocessing. The new cooperative frame work aimed at making India a global power has many facets including strategic, energy and economic components. However, the civilian nuclear cooperation agreement which is part of the overall energy dialogue attracted most attention due to its serious implications for global non- proliferation regime and on the South Asian Security Environment.

This deal could allow India to make qualitative and quantitative improvement in its nuclear arsenal, triggering a possible nuclear arms competition in the region, involving Pakistan, India and China, thus destabilizing the entire region of South Asia.

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Introduction:-

The joint statement of 18 July 2005 provided a roadmap for future strategic partnership between India and the US. The new cooperation frame work aimed at making India a global power has many facets including strategic, energy and economic components. However, the civilian nuclear cooperation agreement which is part of the overall energy dialogue attracted most attention due to its serious implications for global non-proliferation regime and on the South Asian Security Environment. The agreement would enable India to acquire civil nuclear technology from the US and other members of the nuclear suppliers group (NSG), and accord India, defacto status of a nuclear weapon state (NWS).

The nuclear deal remains unchecked, could allow India to make qualitative and quantitative improvement in its nuclear arsenal, triggering a possible nuclear arms competition in the region, involving Pakistan, India, and possibly China. Thus destabilizing the entire region. Similarly, the overall India US Strategic partnership at the possible cost of regional instability could impinge players; forcing smaller countries to re-evaluate their security imperatives and explore options such as strategic realignments, in order to better safeguard their security interests.

The emerging Indo-US relationship aimed at enhancing India's stature in the region, besides having possible negative implication on south Asian stability does provide US with an opportunity to use its increased leverage with India, and work towards regional stability by helping to resolve outstanding disputes between India and Pakistan. The US could also work with these two non NPT (Non Proliferation Treaty), NWS to bring them into mainstream non proliferation regime through some kind of a regional arrangement, which could alleviate

proliferation concerns of the international community, arising mainly due to non NPT status of India and Pakistan. Such an option would bring the two non-NPT, NWS under a treaty obligation, which could then become a basis for civil nuclear cooperation with other members of the NSG.

Implication on South Asian Security Environment:-

The Indo-US civil nuclear cooperation agreement if implemented without checking India's potential to increase its fissile stocks and eliminating any possibility by India of improving nuclear weapons could lead to arms competition in the region involving Pakistan, India and China, thus destabilization the entire region. United States objective of making India's global or at least a regional military power to achieve its own perceived interests could also impinge upon security interests of other countries, it could force major stakeholders to re-evaluate their security interests in the face of emerging Indo-US Strategic Partnership thus triggering transformation of regional alliance structures, where India is seen decisively shifting towards the United States and Pakistan being compelled to explore options that could best serve its security interests independent of the United States.

The nuclear cooperation agreement once implemented would enable India to make quantitative and qualitative improvement to its nuclear arsenal. The assurance for perpetual nuclear fuel supply from the US would free India's indigenous uranium reserves to be exclusively used for more number of nuclear weapons. India has agreed to allow monitoring of 14 nuclear reactors to ensure nuclear fuel at these sites is not used for weapons, eight other reactors and an unlimited number of future reactors would continue to produce fissile material for producing NWS, free of any international controls. It was reasserted by PM Singh during his

address to the Indian parliament on march 07, once he said, “there will be no capping of our strategic program, and the separation plan ensure adequacy of fissile material and other inputs to meet the current and future requirements of our strategic program, based on our assessment of the threat scenarios. No constraint has been placed on our right to construct new facilities for strategic purposes.” The march 02, separation plan would allow India to increase its production from the estimated 06 to 10 additional nuclear bombs per year. India today has enough separated plutonium for 75 to 110 nuclear weapons. A former senior Indian intelligence official reaffirmed this once he said, “the assurance of nuclear fuel supply from the US and NSG would face India’s existing capacity to produce highly enriched uranium and plutonium for its nuclear weapons program under the deal, India shall have the capability to produce 50 war heads a year”.

India’s insistence on keeping large part of its nuclear facilities outside the inspection regime, insistence on US assurances for perpetual fuel supplies for civilian facilities even if it violates part of the agreement, and India’s reluctances to declare unilateral moratorium on fissile material production clearly indicate India’s intention of increasing its nuclear weapons stockpile. This could make other nuclear weapons states in the region uncomfortable. As Senator Sam Nunn wrote in his article,” there is every reason to suspects the Pakistan and China will react to this deal by ratcheting up there on suspicious and nuclear activities including making additional weapons material and weapons”

Conclusion:-

The intense debate following the Indo-US nuclear cooperation agreement is reminiscent of the 1998 debate on the South Asian NWS tests, once India and Pakistan become overt NWS. The ongoing debate on the implication concerns of the international community are not addressed

through transparent actions of the parties involved. The deal if remained unchecked could once again destabilize the South Asian region having long term implications and lead to possible transformation of intra and interregional alliance structures. The nuclear agreement has also highlighted the need to integrate the NPT outliers in to the mainstreams non- proliferation regime through innovative approaches such as PNR that could ensure that now NPT, NWS do not export nuclear technology to other NNWS and in return are benefited from peaceful uses of nuclear technology.

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