

India' s Perspective towards NPT

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Abstract-

India's perspective towards NPT is not empty. It has shown enough credentials in the past to prove its seriousness towards a complete global disarmament. The study of NPT shows its significance for India and reason for not signing NPT. It has been discussed that the main argument for not joined the NPT is that it is discriminatory and distinguishes between ' nuclear weapon states' (NWS) and 'non-nuclear weapon states' (NNWS). India is not a signatory of the treaty. However, the number of signatory countries to this treaty enables others to place pressure on India in curtailing its proliferation and testing of nuclear fissile material.

India's interest lies with not signing these discriminatory treaties unless and until these are amended to accommodate our genuine concerns.

Key Words- Nonproliferation, nuclear weapons, Zangger Committee.

"Unless there is substantial progress evidence in the nuclear disarmament field we are going to have very serious erosion of the confidence of states parties to the Treaty. This could be quite dangerous for the future, and so I would hope that the nuclear-weapon states in particular and the other supporters of the indefinite extension of the Treaty... would bear this in mind and work together with other states parties to ensure that the objectives of the Treaty are fulfilled, and soon."
UN under Secretary General Jayanatha Dhanapala, President of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, speaking shortly after the Treaty was made permanent.

Introduction

The Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) is the foundation of international efforts to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons. The treaty, which entered into force in 1970, had an initial life-span of twenty-five years. In 1995, parties to the treaty voted to extend its duration indefinitely. At the same time, they decided to strengthen the

process by which they review the treaty' s implementation. Every five years NPT parties hold a Review Conference to discuss treaty implementation. The seventh Review Conference was held at the United Nations in New York from May 2 to May 27, 2005. (1)

Only five states are permitted by the NPT to own nuclear weapons: United States (signed 1968), United Kingdom (1968), France (1992), Soviet Union (1968; since replaced by Russia), and the People's Republic of China (1992). These were the only states possessing such weapons at that time, and are also the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council. These 5 Nuclear Weapons States (NWS) agree not to transfer nuclear weapons technology to other states, and the non-NWS state parties agree not to seek to develop nuclear weapons.

Three states - India, Pakistan, and Israel - have declined to sign the treaty. All three possess nuclear weapons, which would be prohibited had any of them ratified the treaty. These countries argue that the NPT creates a club of "nuclear haves" and a larger group of "nuclear have-nots" by restricting the legal possession of nuclear weapons to those states that tested them before 1967, but the treaty never explains on what ethical grounds such a distinction is valid.

Opened for signature : 1 July 1968.

Entered into force : 5 March 1970.

Duration : Indefinite. Twenty five years after the entry into force of the NPT, at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference held in New York at the United Nations from 17 April to 12 May 1995, States Parties agreed without a vote that the Treaty shall continue in force indefinitely.

Number of Parties: 189 States (this number excludes the DPRK)
 Depositories: Russia, United Kingdom, and United States.

The NPT has three main purposes: To check the further proliferation of nuclear weapons Peaceful use of nuclear energy and To encourage eventual nuclear disarmament.

India' s refusal

There are numerous reasons that India has offered for not signing the NPT. While it is acknowledged that India has had an important impact in the drafting of the treaty and having joined the Partial Test Ban Treaty in 1963, believing that it would be a start to reversing the nuclear arms race, Indian officials felt that the treaty was discriminatory, dividing the world into those possessing nuclear weapons and those that do not. This is noted in former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi' s speech when she asserted that:

India' s refusal to sign the NPT was based on enlightened self-interest and the considerations of national security nuclear weapon powers insist on their right to continue to manufacture more nuclear weapons. This is a situation that cannot be viewed with equanimity by non-nuclear countries, especially as they are called upon to undertake not to manufacture or acquire nuclear weapons for their own defense. At

the same time, we have stated that the Government of India does not propose to manufacture nuclear weapons. We shall continue our efforts for nuclear disarmament because it is only through nuclear disarmament that discrimination would be eliminated and equality between nations established. (2)

Primarily because of these concerns, India refused to sign the NPT, even though they were a primary cog in initiating the movement necessary for this treaty to get passed.

India objected to the draft treaty on various grounds. Speaking before the Lok Sabha on May 31, 1967, M.C.Chagla, the then external affairs minister, expressed the governments views on NPT. He said, "The NPT was to be a step towards disarmament. We find in this treaty that it is not a step towards disarmament. The treaty merely aims at preventing horizontal proliferation without preventing vertical proliferation". In other words, it prevents the have-nots from acquiring nuclear power without any obligations being cast upon the haves either to freeze them, stockpile or to reduce them. This is the first objection to the treaty.

The second objection which is equally serious is that it impedes peaceful research or research for peaceful purposes. Now we are told that the non-nuclear countries should not have peaceful explosions. It is suggested that it is very difficult to make out a distinction between peaceful explosions and military explosions.

Thirdly, this treaty on the face of it is discriminatory; whereas the non-nuclear powers are expected to subject themselves to inspection and supervision, the nuclear powers will not be subject to supervision. Setting aside all such objections on June 12, 1968 the resolution was passed in the General Assembly by ninety-five votes to four with twenty-one abstentions including India.

India' s nuclear explosion in 1974 invited sharp criticism from US and Canada. Concomitantly, an unprecedented rise in oil prices due to the 1973 Arab-Israel war increased the demand for nuclear energy. It was feared that due to the commercial greed, nuclear exporting companies would undermine the nuclear supply regime. Under article III of the NPT, an exporters committee, commonly known as the Zangger Committee drew up nuclear supplier' s guidelines which specified the items which would trigger safeguards if exported.

On the domestic front, the US Congress passed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Act in 1978. Under this act any non-nuclear weapon states which took nuclear assistance from the US are required to undergo IAEA inspection and apply safeguards for all nuclear activities. Invoking NNPA (1978), the supply of nuclear enriched fuel to the Tarapur Atomic Power station was suspended.

Thus, through its stick-and-carrot policy the US sought to induce countries like India to sign the NPT. Nevertheless India adhered to the objectives of the nuclear non-proliferation but was opposed to signing it in its present form. India considers it discriminatory, as it allows the nuclear haves to keep their arsenals, while shutting out the have-nots. India believes in total N-Disarmament. When China, France and South Africa decided to sign NPT and Argentina and Brazil opened their nuclear facilities to international inspection and some Republics of the former USSR surrendered their nuclear arms to Russia and signed NPT, it became difficult for India to resist pressure.

Conclusion-

Different countries have different foreign policy objectives to achieve and they cooperate with other countries where their interests converge. The same is true with India-US relations as well.

After analyzing India's concern about NPT we now arrive at the most delicate part of this topic. Should India sign this treaty in present form? In realistic and pragmatist sense the answer must be 'no'. India's interest lies with not signing this discriminatory treaty unless and until this is amended to accommodate our genuine concerns.

References-

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