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CNDP Statement and Australian attitude

On Indo-US Nuke Deal

- Homepage - News - External sources -

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Our colleagues in India are telling us the ball is in our court. We have to stop the dirty nuclear deal between India and the US, which undermines the law, provokes other countries to get nukes of their own, and dangles a perilous sword of Damocles, as John F. Kennedy characterized the nuclear threat, over the whole world. The US Congress must reject Bush's deal to share nuclear technology with India, which leaves a good number of India's reactors out from under the protection of IAEA inspections and verification so they can be used for bomb factories without interference.

This is a recipe for chaos! If your government is a member of the [Suppliers Group](#) that's another way to try to stop the deal.

Alice Slater, co-founder of Abolition 2000 Network

This appeal is supported by ACDN.

FRANCE is one of the main nuclear suppliers, AREVA being the first nuclear company in the world. Recently, president Chirac went to India, even preceding president Bush there, to sell French nuclear know-how and supplies. He is [a great patriot, arms-merchant and atom-merchant](#).

French contribution to nuclear proliferation is a very long story, beginning with Israel at the end of the 50ies, pursuing with Irak during the 70ies when Mr Chirac, at the time Prime minister, did decide to sell to Saddam Hussein a "research reactor" named "Osirak" (1975), and so on with several other countries. This scandal must cease.

The Coalition for Nuclear Disarmament and Peace (CNDP), India expresses its deep distress and concern at the euphoria being drummed up by the government of India, and the media, over the visit by the US president and further cementing of the nuclear 'deal' between the two states. The attitude of the Indian government, and the media, closely mirrors their attitude eight years back in the aftermath of the May 98 nuclear blasts in Pokhran.

If the blasts carried out then, in flagrant violation of India's longstanding position championing global nuclear disarmament, had elicited no sign of remorse from the Indian elite at that act of huge immorality and utter stupidity, this time as well the further compounding of that stupendous crime, by desperately seeking international stamp of approval for its status as a nuclear weapons state through this dangerous 'deal' severely undermining global efforts towards nuclear non-proliferation and universal disarmament, is being shamelessly and brazenly paraded as a great 'national' achievement. The prime minister of India has called it "historic", and no less. He has shown no hesitation whatever in being co-opted, in the process, as a junior partner in the US game plan - to function as a frontline state of its newly acquired patron in this part of the globe, to establish its unilateral and unfettered global dominance.

The orchestrated hype and hoopla notwithstanding, the 'deal' entitling India to have 'civilian' nuclear trade with the US - and also other constituents of the 45-member Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), in gross violation of the relevant provisions of the (Nuclear) Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) currently enjoying the endorsement of 187 out of total 191 members of the UN, as regards its 'civilian' nuclear plants now identified, as negotiated and agreed between the two states, remains yet to be approved by the US Congress.

This gives the anti-nuke peace movements in this country, and the world over, a window of opportunity to block this pernicious 'deal' by mobilising public opinion, anywhere and everywhere, against it, which promises to trigger off an all-round rush for the weapons of deliberate mass murder all the world over.

We must measure up to this terrible challenge!

Statement Committee CNDP

PS:

About time Canberra dusted off its uranium policy

By Hamish McDonald March 11, 2006

[Sydney Morning Herald](#)

SUN XIAODI is a man with an interesting story to tell the Australian officials rushing to fix up a safeguards agreement covering future uranium exports to China before next month's visit by the Premier, Wen Jiaba Sun, aged 50, spent much of his working life at the No. 92 uranium mine in a remote Tibetan-populated region of Gansu province. A year ago he surfaced in Beijing with some startling allegations about malpractice at the mine.

As well as accusing mine administrators of allowing radioactive contamination of local land and water, resulting in above-normal cancer rates, Mr Sun said they had been operating the mine illegally after it was officially closed in 2002.

The reluctance of local officials to obey Beijing's orders to shut down thousands of small, unsafe coalmines is well known. Many are investors in the mines. But the idea of an illegal uranium mine is shocking. To whom would they sell the uranium ore? Are drums of yellowcake being smuggled across north-west China into the markets of Central Asia?

Unfortunately, Mr Sun is not available to elaborate. Nearly 11 months ago he was picked off the streets of Beijing by men in an unmarked car. His lodgings were searched and friends told he was detained for "a very serious crime related to state security".

Whether his allegations are true or not, or whether similar cases are awaiting a brave whistleblower, we don't know. But the case points up a bizarre contradiction in Australia's uranium export policy as it still stands after John Howard's visit to India this week.

On one hand, uranium exports to China are OK, because China was one of five countries that exploded a nuclear device before 1967 and could therefore get into the nuclear non-proliferation treaty as a weapons state.

India's nuclear program lagged, so it was unable to carry out its first test until 1974. It pretended this was a "peaceful nuclear explosion" for a long time, but did not pretend it was eschewing the weapons option and stayed out of the treaty.

China did not join the treaty until 1992, and only in 1996 did it specifically stop nuclear assistance to non-treaty states. Before then it was the mother of all proliferators, helping Pakistan attain an untested nuclear capability by the late 1980s. Pakistan's "rogue" nuclear scientist, Abdul Qadeer Khan, later sub-proliferated bomb designs and enrichment centrifuges to Libya, Iran and North Korea.

Norinco and some other Chinese state arms corporations remain under US embargo for proliferating technology relating to weapons of mass destruction and their delivery missiles. Western intelligence sources say fake "end-user" certificates are easily forthcoming from Chinese arms salesmen.

By contrast, India has never given any hint of nuclear proliferation, and tightened controls at America's request before the first Gulf War on precursor materials for chemical weapons. It has agreed to put 14 of its 22 power reactors under International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards and inspections to verify that any foreign-sourced fuel is not diverted to making weapons. These will be comparable to the agency and bilateral

On Indo-US Nuke Deal

verification routines China will have to accept to get our uranium.

Which is the more trustworthy? Because India is not a treaty member, Mr Howard says Australia is bound not to export uranium to it. The critics of the US nuclear deal, which Australia is now under Indian pressure to follow, say an exception would encourage renegades like Iran to break out of the non-proliferation treaty.

Actually, barriers to exporting uranium to India are erected by Canberra's policies, not the treaty's rules. The treaty allows export of "source or special fissionable material" to non-member states for peaceful purposes, as long as safeguards are applied. India's case - like those of Israel and Pakistan - is quite different from those of Iran, Libya and North Korea, which all pursued nuclear weapons development covertly while members of the treaty.

Uranium imports for civilian reactors will certainly free limited domestic supplies for weapons-making in India, but the same applies to China, which is expanding its current minimal battery of about 30 land-based nuclear missiles in order to retain deterrence in the face of the US's new missile defences.

We don't have to show enthusiasm for India going nuclear - India has its own critics like the writer Arundhati Roy, who see it as betrayal of independence ideals - and a bilateral deal would not get India into the treaty as a weapons state.

But neither should we act as though we trust communist China more than democratic India. Canberra's policy needs to be updated.

This is the first of a weekly column by the Herald's new Asia-Pacific editor.

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