

PRESS RELEASE

India's Integration into an Expanded Nonproliferation System

WASHINGTON, June 30, 2010 – The following is a statement from The Working Group on an Expanded Nonproliferation System, established as part of a project sponsored by the Center for Strategic and International Studies and the Nuclear Threat Initiative. The group includes experts in international nuclear affairs and in foreign policy from both India and the United States. This statement represents the views of the working group members whose names are given below. It does not necessarily represent the views of CSIS or NTI, or of the institutions to which the signers belong.

In 2008, India and the United States, with the concurrence of the Nuclear Suppliers' Group, completed a path-breaking agreement that made possible civilian nuclear commerce with India. This agreement was intended to put India's civilian nuclear facilities under safeguards and end India's nuclear isolation.

It also aimed to bring about more complete Indian participation in the nonproliferation system. The Working Group on an Expanded Nuclear Nonproliferation System believes it is time to move toward this goal by bringing India into the export control groups and other arrangements that are a vital part of the nonproliferation system.

The Indo-U.S. civil nuclear agreement included significant changes in U.S. law and policy that were possible only because of India's strong record of preventing its own nuclear materials from being illegally exported or otherwise used for proliferation. India and the United States agree that it is vital to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and associated technology. Both countries agree, in other words, on the importance of nonproliferation. India's nuclear weapons prevent it from joining the Non-Proliferation Treaty as a non-weapons state, and the language of the treaty precludes India's adhering as a weapons state. In light of the frictions generated by India's anomalous status, the working group believes it is more useful to focus on other institutions and mechanisms that can help strengthen the international nonproliferation system.

The working group urges the Indian and U.S. governments to give high priority to reaching agreement in principle on this issue in the context of U.S. President Barack Obama's planned trip to India in November 2010. Specifically, the group recommends that the two governments:

- Agree in principle to bring India into the four non-proliferation export control groups (the Nuclear Suppliers' Group; the Missile Technology Control Regime; the Wassenaar Arrangement, which addresses armaments trade; and the Australia Group, which deals with chemical weapons).
- Begin working together to harmonize India's export control regime with those of the Australia Group and the Wassenaar Arrangement. Harmonization with the MTCR and NSG export control guidelines was already accomplished in the context of the U.S.-India civil nuclear agreement.

- Initiate consultations with the other members of the export control groups to make possible India's swift accession.
- Start addressing the obstacles to India's membership in the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI).

A policy that followed these recommendations would have clear benefits for both countries and for the world. For India, membership in these institutions would acknowledge India's essential role in preventing proliferation of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction. It would fulfill the promise implicit in the U.S.-India nuclear agreement of treating India as a responsible state with advanced nuclear technology. It would bring India into the process of creating export control standards for the future, a particularly important point in light of India's rapidly growing economy and expanding footprint in international trade in sophisticated technology.

For the United States, this policy would strengthen the global nonproliferation system that has been a high priority for administrations of both U.S. political parties for several decades. It would strengthen the export control systems of a potentially significant supplier of sensitive items, and ensure that there are no hurdles in India's implementing future changes to export control regimes. Indian membership would bring its major nautical presence into the PSI. This would be especially important in the critical sea lanes of communication in and near the Indian Ocean. These actions would also strengthen the U.S. partnership with India.

The world at large, finally, would benefit from a stronger nonproliferation system. This objective has strong and broad support around the world. It would underline India's commitment to the global nonproliferation system.

Implementing the working group's recommendations will involve policy adjustments and a great deal of hard work, both within the Indian and U.S. governments and in consultations with other members of the organizations in question. Most of the organizations expect their members to be NPT signatories, though in some cases this has not always been a condition of membership, and it is not enshrined in law. Bringing India in would require adjusting that practice. The working group notes in this context that India, like the other members of the export control organizations, has a longstanding commitment to working in good faith toward nuclear disarmament.

We believe that India's membership would support the fundamental purposes for which the nonproliferation export control groups were established, and that such a change would be desirable. The working group believes that India's membership would give India additional responsibilities for managing global safety and security, even as it recognized India's increasingly important participation in global nuclear commerce.

In the year since it was first formed, the working group has had useful discussions on nuclear issues that figure in the official U.S.-India dialogue, including nuclear security and the prerequisites for nuclear disarmament. The group will continue to explore the issues that touch on nonproliferation, in the hope of adding to and deepening the U.S.-India conversation on a subject both countries care deeply about.

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The Working Group on an Expanded Nonproliferation System was formed in the summer of 2009 to identify goals for the nonproliferation system on which India and the United States might be able to agree, and to develop a workable road map for a revived nonproliferation system that could integrate India. Members joining in this statement are:

From the United States:

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Neal Urwitz

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