

## TOWARD A NUCLEAR FREE WORLD

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### THE MOMENTUM BUILDS UP

"We committed our two countries to achieving a nuclear free world." Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and U.S. President Barack Obama announced on April 1 in London. Though they did not mention any deadline, the two leaders' joint statement was significant. Not only because Russia and the United States possess about 95 percent of nuclear weapons, but also because the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) signed by Mikhail Gorbachev and Ronald Reagan in 1991 is the last of its kind and expires end of this year.

In a major policy speech in Prague on April 5, Obama spelt out the steps necessary to achieve a nuclear free world. These include: strategic U.S. arms reductions together with Russia in the course of this year: strengthening of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT); ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) by the U.S.; engagement with Iran and others as well as offers of cooperation aimed at dissuading them from taking an undesirable course of action.

However, the very day President Obama delivered that speech, North Korea, launched a missile - in contravention of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1718, thus posing a serious challenge to East Asian regional peace and stability. Japan expressed great concern. "North Korea's nuclear development, coupled with its missile development, is posing a serious threat not only to East Asia but to the entire international community," Japan's foreign minister Hirofumi Nakasone said.

Having suffered nuclear catastrophes on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan knows the horror of nuclear devastation from its own experience. Realizing a world free of nuclear weapons is therefore Japan's long-cherished hope. To that end, Japan has been actively engaging in nuclear disarmament diplomacy.

Consistent with its approach, Japan urged nuclear powers April 27 to reduce their stockpiles of nuclear weapons as a step toward a nuclear free world. In a speech entitled 'Conditions towards Zero - 11 Benchmarks for Global Nuclear Disarmament', Foreign Minister Nakasone put forward an 11-point initiative for promoting global nuclear disarmament.

Japan plans to propose these benchmarks at the 2010 NPT Review Conference and foster a favourable environment for a successful conclusion of this Conference. Meanwhile, the foreign minister hopes that the International Commission on Nuclear Nonproliferation and Disarmament, which is co-chaired by former Japanese Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi and former Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans, will draw up a set of realistic, action-oriented proposals that will guide all countries toward a world free of nuclear weapons: The commission's final meeting is scheduled to be held in Hiroshima this autumn.

"In order to realise a world free of nuclear weapons, it is necessary that while nuclear weapons-holding states engage in nuclear disarmament, the entire international community adopts and complies with universal norms for disarmament and non-proliferation," Nakasone said. He pleaded for restrictions on ballistic missiles capable of delivering a nuclear warhead. - Ramesh Jaura ☑

Voices of the South on Globalization is a monthly newsletter intended to inspire a meaningful North-South Dialogue by raising awareness for global interdependences and by offering a forum for voices from the South in the globalization debate. Each edition will present short analyses or commentaries from a Southern perspective on one particular issue of the globalization process.

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## CONDITIONS TOWARDS ZERO

## 11 Benchmarks for Global Nuclear Disarmament

Japan has proposed a resolution for the total elimination of nuclear weapons to the United Nations General Assembly every year for the past 15 years and has otherwise been engaged in active nuclear disarmament diplomacy. In a move to take advantage of the growing momentum toward a nuclear free world, Japan's Foreign Minister Hirofumi Nakasone has put forward an 11-point initiative for promoting global nuclear disarmament.

The significance of the "11 benchmarks for global nuclear disarmament" tabled on April 27 needs to be viewed against the backdrop that although Japan developed into a major economic power after World War II, the country has maintained its three non-nuclear principles of not possessing, not producing and not permitting the introduction of nuclear weapons. This policy is based on the fact that Japan is the only country to have experienced the nuclear devastation. It has strictly committed itself to concentrating on the peaceful use of nuclear energy. The 11 benchmarks are:

1. Leadership of and Cooperation between the United States and Russia: The U.S. and Russia will lead the world toward a new security order by holding comprehensive bilateral strategic dialogues to conclude a successor treaty to START 1 at an early date, further reduce nuclear warheads, build mutual confidence regarding missile defence and strengthen the framework for controlling nuclear weapons and material.

2. Nuclear Disarmament by China and Other Nuclear Weapons-Holding States: It is vital for the promotion of global nuclear disarmament that these countries take nuclear disarmament measures, including the reduction of nuclear weapons, while enhancing transparency over their arsenals. They must freeze the development of nuclear weapons and missiles and other delivery vehicles that would undermine the momentum toward nuclear disarmament while the United States and Russia are making nuclear disarmament efforts. The nuclear disarmament efforts made by Britain and France over the past several years should be further enhanced.

3. Transparency over Nuclear Arsenals: The nuclear weapons-holding states should work together to nurture a new concept of "culture of information disclosure". They should make regular and sufficient information disclosure concerning their own nuclear arsenals, such as the numbers of nuclear weapons, excess nuclear fissile material and delivery vehicles.

4. Irreversible Nuclear Disarmament: Japan welcomes nuclear disarmament measures so far taken by some nuclear weapons states, such as the dismantlement of nuclear warheads, nuclear testing sites and facilities to produce fissile material for nuclear weapons purposes, and urges nuclear weapons-holding states that have not yet taken such irreversible disarmament measures to implement them.

5. Study on Future Verification: Japan welcomes the initiative of the United Kingdom and Norway to conduct technical research on the verification approach.

6. Ban on Nuclear Tests: Japan hopes that the U.S. will ratify the CTBT treaty before the 2010 NPT Review Conference. On its part, it will plead with China, India, Pakistan and other countries whose ratifications are necessary for the treaty's entry-into-force for their early ratification of the CTBT. It will provide technical training for seismology experts from relevant countries. Furthermore, Japan calls for a moratorium on nuclear tests, pending the entry into force of the CTBT.

7. Ban on Production of Fissile Material for Nuclear Weapons Purposes: Japan favours immediate negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty, which bans the production of highly enriched uranium and plutonium that are used for nuclear weapons. It pleads for a moratorium on the production of fissile material for weapon purposes pending the conclusion of this treaty.

8. Restrictions on Ballistic Missiles: Japan supports the globalization of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty between the U.S. and Russia, and the EU's move to propose a treaty to ban short- and intermediate-range ground-to-ground missiles.

9. International Cooperation for Civil Nuclear Energy: Japan undertook an initiative, called "3S", referring to safeguards, nuclear safety, and nuclear security and is striving to make the importance of "3S" an international common understanding. In cooperation with the IAEA, Japan will host an international conference in Tokyo this autumn on nuclear security related to Asian countries, particularly those introducing nuclear power plants.

10. IAEA Safeguards: Japan believes that it is important to enhance transparency over the activities of individual countries by ensuring that all countries using nuclear energy for peaceful purposes do so in compliance with the highest level of IAEA safeguards, specifically, Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements and the Model Additional Protocol. With this in view, Japan is promoting the universalisation of those measures. It will continue to share knowledge and experience in this regard with other countries.

11. Prevention of nuclear terrorism: To prevent nuclear terrorism, it is essential to enhance the management of not only nuclear power plants and related nuclear fuel cycle facilities but also the control of all nuclear and radioactive material. Japan welcomes President Obama's proposal to make new international efforts to strengthen the control of nuclear material and host a 'Global Summit on Nuclear Security'. Japan will cooperate with the United States in efforts to bring this global summit to a successful conclusion. - Jaya Ramachandran ☑

## AT A CROSSROADS

### The NPT Process and the Review Conference

The third preparatory committee (PrepCom) meeting for the 2010 Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) takes place at the UN in New York May 4-15 against a background of increasing calls for progress on nuclear disarmament and measures to strengthen the Treaty. The NPT was concluded in 1968 and entered into force on March 5, 1970. It is the founding document of multilateral non proliferation endeavours.

Knowledgeable sources say it will be a litmus test of the seriousness of nuclear weapons states to move towards a nuke free world. "We are at a cross roads. On the one hand the disarmament needs are pressing as the non proliferation challenges are urgent. On the other hand the opportunities and possibilities are perhaps greater than they have been for a decade," says Norway's Foreign Affairs Minister Jonas Gahr Støre.

Together with Germany, Norway raised the issue at the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) summit in Strasbourg (France) and Kehl (Germany). The NATO declaration of April 4 emphasises that "arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation" will continue to make an important contribution to peace, security, and stability. NATO allies reaffirmed that the NPT remains important and that they will contribute constructively to achieving a successful outcome of the 2010 NPT review conference.

It remains to be seen how things will work out in practice. Steffen Kongstad, director-general Security Policy in Norway's Foreign Ministry, said at a seminar April 15 in Oslo: "If we really want to move towards a nuclear weapons free world, we need to acknowledge how nuclear disarmament is dealt with today."

The main track today was the NPT process and the Review Conference next year. Kongstad, an eminent European disarmament expert said the process had "largely been relegated to the closed quarters of some bureaucrats and academics engaging in technical discussions and games. These games has turned into a self-sustained process which is not necessarily aimed at achieving real results, but rather to keep itself going. Forever, if possible."

Knowledgeable sources say that a lot of homework must be done within NATO if positive results are to be achieved in NPT.

Nearly two years ago, Norway and Germany took an initiative within NATO to raise disarmament on to the Alliance's agenda. This initiative was supported by both Iceland and Denmark.

"We have already achieved some results, such as more emphasis on disarmament in NATO summit declaration and that NATO will consider disarmament on a more regular basis," says Kongstad. "Yet, the real test is ahead of us. We will now be embarking on a revision of NATO's strategic concept. Our objective will be that the Alliance in a concrete manner takes steps to reduce its reliance on nuclear weapons and nuclear deterrence. ... This will

not be easy, but we will make a case that unless NATO demonstrates in concrete terms readiness to meet NPT's disarmament obligations, it will in the long run be hard to sustain the global non proliferation regime," says Kongstad.

He also pleads for forging "new kinds of partnerships. For instance, within the Mine Ban Convention there is no Western Group or NAM (Non-Aligned Movement). But civil society is included. The same partnership applies for the Convention on Cluster Munitions. "We must overcome the present sterile division lines within the NPT.

Through the Seven Nation Initiative that includes Australia, Chile, Indonesia, Romania, South Africa and the United Kingdom, Norway has sought to explore ways to develop international consensus on nuclear disarmament and non proliferation.

The importance of NPT was also underlined by Helmut Schmidt, Richard von Weizsäcker, Egon Bahr and Hans-Dietrich Genscher in an article for the International Herald Tribune on January 9 this year. Responding to Henry Kissinger, George Schultz, William Perry and Sam Nunn who issued an appeal for a world free of nuclear weapons in January 2007, they said they "unreservedly support" that appeal.

This applied in particular to the following proposals:

- The vision of a world free of the nuclear threat, as developed by Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev in Reykjavik, must be rekindled.
- Negotiations aimed at drastically reducing the number of nuclear weapons must begin, initially between the United States and Russia, the countries with the largest number of warheads, in order to win over the other countries possessing such weapons.
- The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) must be greatly reinforced.
- America should ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty.
- All short-range nuclear weapons must be destroyed.

From Germany's point of view they added:

- The Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) expires in December this year. Its extension is the most urgent item on the agenda for Washington and Moscow.
- It will be vital to the credibility of the 2010 NPT Review Conference that nuclear-weapon states finally keep their promise under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty to reduce their nuclear arsenals.
- The Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty must be restored. Outer space may only be used for peaceful purposes. - Ramesh Jaura

## LEARNING FROM PREPCOM 2008

The 2008 NPT PrepCom from April 28 to May 9 was probably as good as it can get in the current review process, says Rebecca Johnson in a study for the UK-based Acronym Institute for disarmament diplomacy. Unlike in 2007 - or the previous Review Conference in 2005 - there were no major obstacles to get in the way of a smooth process.

"Paradoxically perhaps, this actually serves to focus attention on the systemic inadequacies and the political disconnect between the NPT processes and the real challenges of preventing the further proliferation, development and use of nuclear weapons;" writes Johnson.

In her view, it is not difficult to identify the elements that need to be worked on to make 2010 a success within NPT terms. The Chair's summary lists them: U.S. ratification of the CTBT - or if that is not possible, a visible, president-led strategy and timetable to win the requisite majority in the Senate - would boost confidence and stimulate strategies for bringing the test ban treaty into force at last.

Ideally President Obama should use 2009 to lay the groundwork for the Senate to take a fresh look early in 2010. If the numbers are not there for the treaty to be ratified before the Review Conference, which would of course be the best scenario, then as long as the U.S. administration could demonstrate its political will and strategy for ratification, the impact on the NPT would be positive, says the study.

Reaffirmation of the undertaking to eliminate nuclear arsenals will need to be given practical credibility through commitments to identify and start work on taking implementation of the relevant parts of the 13 steps to the next stage.

Johnson is of the view that the U.S. and Russia need to negotiate deeper (and verifiable) cuts in their strategic arsenals to follow on from START and SORT. Creating the conditions to negotiate the fissile materials production ban and get the CD back to work would likely be high on most states parties' agendas.

Taking an important point, the study says that the devaluation of nuclear weapons and measures to address nuclear insecurity in the Middle East will be essential, and the sponsors of the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East need to be initiating consultations now with all relevant states - including Israel - to work out what is feasible and necessary in this area.

Even if NPT parties are able to express agreement on these issues, implementation will only come about through actions undertaken in national capacities and if the international community as a whole accepts the imperatives of nuclear disarmament. Therefore, when looking at what can realistically and constructively be achieved at the 2010 Review Conference, civil society and states need also to look beyond 2010 and consider how best to create and use political opportunities to fulfil the NPT's core objectives and aspirations even if these may entail the use of non-NPT fora and institutions. An example of this is the growing movement

for negotiations on nuclear abolition. Though much of the pressure is coming from outside the NPT, including calls for a nuclear weapon prohibition convention, it should be clearly understood that as with the CTBT and fissile materials ban, such a treaty would strengthen the non proliferation regime by codifying and establishing verification mechanisms for the fundamental obligations contained in Article VI.

Johnson considers it absurd for some governments to argue that calling for a global nuclear disarmament conference or negotiations on a nuclear weapon convention risk undermining the NPT. On the contrary, such initiatives would amplify the NPT's abilities to prevent proliferation and would constitute an unrivalled mechanism for engaging the three nuclear weapon possessors outside the NPT.

Similar fears were raised when government and civil society partnerships found it necessary to negotiate outside the Inhumane Weapons Convention (CCW) in order to develop treaties that banned anti-personnel landmines and cluster munitions respectively. With the demonstrated successes of the Ottawa and Oslo Processes, the majority now recognize that such treaties have an important role to play in building norms, contributing to humanitarian law and establishing verification and monitoring systems.

Moreover, if advocates of those bans had been guilt-tripped to confine their efforts to within the direct parameters of the CCW, the governments would still be making statements about their objectives to ban landmines and cluster bombs. Instead, they are now making statements - and taking actions - about what they are doing to implement the bans and remove these weapons from their arsenals and policies, says the report.

To continue to be relevant, states parties to the NPT need to consider not only how to strengthen the regime's institutions and have a constructive, forward looking Review Conference in 2010. They also need to think about what medium and long-term approaches and strategies will best fulfil the fundamental security, non proliferation and disarmament objectives and goals of the treaty.

"This will entail looking beyond the NPT to pursue nuclear abolition. It will require non-discriminatory objectives and the development of mechanisms that engage India, Israel and Pakistan without conferring benefits," writes Johnson. Most of all, the non-nuclear countries will have to be convinced that nuclear disarmament is really on the agenda and that their compliance with the NPT will not leave them to be treated as second class citizens in a world ruled by nuclear weapon possessors. - Jaya Ramachandran ☑

## WITH BASE CAMPS TO THE MOUNTAIN-TOP

A world without nuclear weapons is no longer viewed as a perception belonging to the realm of dreamers or even madcaps. It is very much a realistic possibility provided those in possession of nuclear weapons and fissionable materials soon decide to negotiate a series of multilateral and unilateral measures.

This was the upshot of an international conference April 16-17 in Rome that was joined by the who's who of the disarmament world. The consensus, despite diverse views expressed by more than 70 former and current government officials and experts from over 20 countries from six continents, was that the nuclear weapon states must deeply reduce their stockpiles.

"Full compliance with disarmament and non proliferation treaties, first and foremost the NPT, is an essential condition of real progress towards the achievement of our stated goals," Foreign Minister Franco Frattini of Italy that co-sponsored the conference said summing up the results.

The announcement made in London on April 1 by the Russian President Dmitriy Medvedev and the U.S. President Barack Obama on their willingness to replace START with a new Treaty was of crucial relevance, he said. "It will give new impetus to disarmament and arms control and certainly strengthen our common effort for a successful outcome of the 2010 NPT Review Conference. Other nuclear powers should follow the lead of the U.S. and Russia," Frattini said giving a gist of the consensus reached.

Since Russia and the United States possess about 95 percent of the nuclear weapons of the world, the London statement - "We committed our two countries to achieving a nuclear free world" - all seems set to pave the road to a nuclear weapons free world. But the fact is that the road is littered with multiple obstacles, warned former Mikhail Gorbachev, leader of the now defunct Soviet Union between 1985 and 1991 who signed the START together with the U.S. President Ronald Reagan.

Gorbachev, who presides over the World Political Forum (WPF), urged the U.S. and Russia work towards removing the hurdles. "Unless we address the need to demilitarize international relations, reduce military budgets, put an end to the creation of new kinds of weapons and prevent weaponization of outer space, all talk about a nuclear weapon free world will be just inconsequential rhetoric," Gorbachev told the 'Conference on Overcoming Nuclear Dangers'.

WPF serves as a meeting point for cultures, religions, political leaders and civil society - an open forum where analysis of the issue of interdependence provides a framework for the building of a New World Political Architecture. The conference was organised by the WPF, an international NGO founded in Piedmont (Italy) by Gorbachev, in cooperation with the Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI). Co-chaired by philanthropist and CNN founder Ted Turner and former U.S. Senator Sam Nunn, NTI is governed by an expert and influential board of directors with members from the United States, Russia,

Japan, India, Pakistan, China, Jordan, Sweden, France and Britain. In view of the complexity of issues involved on way to nuclear abolition, the idea of a "base camps" leading up to the nuclear-free mountaintop was mooted.

Such base camps and supportive measures in other areas of arms control and security cooperation can help usher in a world free of nuclear weapons, said a joint statement by Gorbachev, Schultz, and Italian Foreign Minister Frattini.

The statement emerging from the conference says, there is a growing recognition - both inside and outside of governments - of the need to embrace the vision of a world free of nuclear weapons and the urgent steps necessary to overcome the nuclear dangers.

"The current shift towards nuclear abolition in the international political arena, where such a vision has so far been seen as unrealistic, provides a vital opportunity, Hirotsugu Terasaki, executive director of peace affairs of the Tokyo-based Buddhist association Soka Gakkai International (SGI) said. Collaborating with international antinuclear movements such as the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) initiated by International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW), the organisation launched the People's Decade in September 2007. "The aim of the People's Decade is to increase the number of people who reject nuclear weapons. Ordinary citizens and civil society must be the protagonists," Terasaki said.

SGI was one of just three civil society organisations that took part in the Rome conference; the other two being the 'Italian Peace Roundtable' - the network which unites more than 1500 civil society organisations and Local Authorities - and the 'Global Security Institute' (GSI). "We have a situation where chemical weapons and biological weapons are condemned universally but nuclear weapons, which are even more horrific than biological or chemical, are allegedly acceptable in the hands of nine countries (Britain, France, Russia, China, Canada and the United States as well as India, Pakistan and North Korea). This is incoherent and unsustainable," the U.S.-based GSI's President Jonathan Granoff said in a brief interview. "The only solution is to either allow all countries to use these terrific devices - clearly unacceptable - or to universally ban them," he said.

Welcoming the idea of setting up "base camps" and charting out from their the course of reaching the summit (a nuclear free world), India's former foreign secretary (top official of the external affairs ministry) and disarmament expert Lalit Mansingh said in an interview: "The idea emphasises the complexity and difficulty of achieving the task of zero nukes, that is, a total elimination of nuclear weapons." - Ramesh Jaura ☒

## INDIA, CHINA AND NPT

- India has a flourishing nuclear power program and expects to have 20,000 MWe of nuclear capacity on line by 2020.
  - China has electricity demand growing at 20 percent per year and a rapidly-expanding nuclear power program. Nuclear capacity of at least 40,000 MWe is planned by 2020.
  - India is already self-sufficient in reactor design and construction and China has become so for second-generation units, but is importing Generation-3 plants.
- India's uranium resources are limited, so it is focusing on developing the thorium fuel cycle to utilise its extensive reserves of thorium.
- China's uranium resources are modest and it is starting to rely on imported uranium.

India is the world's largest democracy, with over one billion citizens. China has over 1.2 billion people. They represent about half of the world's population which is rapidly increasing its energy, and particularly electricity, use. They both have well-considered policies to increase dramatically their use of nuclear power to make that electricity. Both see nuclear power as an important ingredient of sustainable development.

India's nuclear weapons program is described by its government as a necessary minimum deterrent in the face of regional nuclear threats that include a considerably larger Chinese nuclear arsenal as well as Pakistan's nuclear arms.

While India and China are alike in having large aspirations to produce clean energy in the 21st century using nuclear power, the two countries occupy quite different positions in relation to the NPT. China exploded its first weapon in 1964, and India did so in 1974. Between those dates, the NPT went into effect. Under its terms, China became recognised as one of the world's five 'weapon states'.

For its part, India was left with the choice of remaining outside the NPT or relinquishing any possibility of maintaining even a minimal nuclear deterrent. In the light of perceived strategic challenges from both China and Pakistan, India chose a nuclear deterrent. However, it has been scrupulous in ensuring that its weapons material and technology are guarded against commercial or illicit export to other countries. Pakistan has been conspicuously unscrupulous, and China has been sometimes unduly flexible. Meanwhile, international efforts to build a stronger non-proliferation regime had the effect of penalising India harshly.

The NPT itself requires only that internationally-traded nuclear material and technology be safeguarded - a condition that India has continually made clear it is willing to accept, even though it declines to disarm and join the NPT as a "non-weapon-state".

However, in 1992, in an effort to induce expanded participation in the NPT, the informal 'club' of nations called the Nuclear Suppliers Group decided - as a matter of policy, not law - to prohibit all nuclear commerce with nations that have not agreed to full-scope safeguards. This precondition effectively requires countries to join the NPT as non-weapon-states if they are to participate in nuclear commerce. As a practical matter, this left India as a pariah in the world of nuclear commerce.

India's response has been to intensify its embrace of the ethos of self-reliance as it continues its dual policy of maintaining a small nuclear deterrent while pursuing peaceful nuclear power on a ever-larger scale.

In October 2002 - while India was hosting a major conference of signatories to the International Framework Convention on Climate Change - the Indian Prime Minister called for a rational review of global non-proliferation policy. Specifically, he asked the international community to:

1. Focus on clandestine and illegal development and transfer of missile and nuclear technology;
2. Recognise that India's indigenous nuclear weapons program provides nothing more than a "minimum credible deterrent" that is necessary for its regional security and that India has not contributed to nuclear proliferation beyond its borders;
3. Take cognizance of the global environmental importance of India's civil nuclear power program and cooperate with it, using safeguards to ensure that all traded material is used for peaceful purposes; and
4. End its hypocrisy in relation to the Kyoto Protocol on climate change. ("It is truly ironic that we are lectured on our moral obligations to clamp down on emissions while being denied international technology cooperation.")

In March 2006 India and the USA signed an agreement designed to put India on the same basis as China in relation to international trade in nuclear technology and materials. The agreement was finalised in July 2007, opening the way for India's participation in international commerce in nuclear fuel and equipment and requiring India to put most of the country's nuclear power reactors under IAEA safeguards and close down the Cirus research reactor by 2010. It would allow India to reprocess US-origin and other foreign-sourced nuclear fuel at a new national plant under IAEA safeguards. This would be for used fuel arising from those 14 reactors designated as unambiguously civilian and under full IAEA safeguards.

The IAEA Director General welcomed the agreement in 2006 as "an important step towards satisfying India's growing need for energy, including nuclear technology and fuel, as an engine for development." It would bring India closer as an important partner in the non-proliferation regime, he said, and would "also be a step towards the universalisation of international safeguards regime" and "timely for ongoing efforts to consolidate the non proliferation regime, combat nuclear terrorism and strengthen nuclear safety." - **Jaya Ramachandran with report from the World Nuclear Association.**