

# Nuclear Weapons, Criminal States, and the US-India Deal

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Nuclear-armed states are criminal states. They have a legal obligation, confirmed by the World Court, to live up to Article 6 of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, which calls on them to carry out good-faith negotiations to eliminate nuclear weapons entirely. None of the nuclear states has lived up to it.

The United States is a leading violator, especially the Bush administration, which even has stated that it isn't subject to Article 6.

On July 27, Washington entered into an agreement with India that guts the central part of the NPT, though there remains substantial opposition in both countries. India, like Israel and Pakistan (but unlike Iran), is not an NPT signatory, and has developed nuclear weapons outside the treaty. With this new agreement, the Bush administration effectively endorses and facilitates this outlaw behaviour. The agreement violates US law, and bypasses the Nuclear Suppliers Group, the 45 nations that have established strict rules to lessen the danger of proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Daryl Kimball, executive director of the Arms Control Association,

observes that the agreement doesn't bar further Indian nuclear testing and, "incredibly, ... commits Washington to help New Delhi secure fuel supplies from other countries even if India resumes testing." It also permits India to "free up its limited domestic supplies for bomb production." All these steps are in direct violation of international nonproliferation agreements.

The Indo-US agreement is likely to prompt others to break the rules as well. Pakistan is reported to be building a plutonium production reactor for nuclear weapons, apparently beginning a more advanced phase of weapons design. Israel, the regional nuclear superpower, has been lobbying Congress for privileges similar to India's, and has approached the Nuclear Suppliers Group with requests for exemption from its rules. Now France, Russia and Australia have moved to pursue nuclear deals with India, as China has with Pakistan - hardly a surprise, once the global superpower has opened the door.

The Indo-US deal mixes military and commercial motives. Nuclear weapons specialist Gary Milhollin noted Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's testimony to Congress that the agreement was "crafted with the private sector firmly in mind," particularly aircraft and reactors and, Milhollin stresses, military aircraft. By undermining the barriers against nuclear war, he

adds, the agreement  
 not only increases regional tensions but also "may  
 hasten the day  
 when a nuclear explosion destroys an American  
 city." Washington's  
 message is that "export controls are less important  
 to the United  
 States than money" - that is, profits for US  
 corporations - whatever  
 the potential threat. Kimball points out that the  
 United States is  
 granting India "terms of nuclear trade more  
 favourable than those for  
 states that have assumed all the obligations and  
 responsibilities" of  
 the NPT. In most of the world, few can fail to see  
 the cynicism.  
 Washington rewards allies and clients that ignore  
 the NPT rules  
 entirely, while threatening war against Iran, which  
 is not known to  
 have violated the NPT, despite extreme  
 provocation: The United States  
 has occupied two of Iran's neighbours and openly  
 sought to overthrow  
 the Iranian regime since it broke free of US control  
 in 1979.

Over the past few years, India and Pakistan have  
 made strides towards  
 easing the tensions between the two countries.  
 People-to-people  
 contacts have increased and the governments are  
 in discussion over  
 the many outstanding issues that divide the two  
 states. Those  
 promising developments may well be reversed by  
 the Indo-US nuclear  
 deal. One of the means to build confidence  
 throughout the region was  
 the creation of a natural gas pipeline from Iran  
 through Pakistan  
 into India. The "peace pipeline" would have tied  
 the region together  
 and opened the possibilities for further peaceful  
 integration.

The pipeline, and the hope it offers, might become  
 a casualty of the  
 Indo-US agreement, which Washington sees as a  
 measure to isolate its

Iranian enemy by offering India nuclear power in  
 exchange for Iranian  
 gas - though in fact India would gain only a fraction  
 of what Iran  
 could provide.

The Indo-US deal continues the pattern of  
 Washington's taking every  
 measure to isolate Iran. In 2006, the US Congress  
 passed the Hyde  
 Act, which specifically demanded that the US  
 government "secure  
 India's full and active participation in United States  
 efforts to  
 dissuade, isolate, and if necessary, sanction and  
 contain Iran for  
 its efforts to acquire weapons of mass destruction."

It is noteworthy that the great majority of  
 Americans - and Iranians  
 - favour converting the entire region to a nuclear-  
 weapons free zone,  
 including Iran and Israel. One may also recall that  
 UN Security  
 Council Resolution 687 of April 3, 1991, to which  
 Washington  
 regularly appealed when seeking justification for  
 its invasion of  
 Iraq, calls for "establishing in the Middle East a  
 zone free from  
 weapons of mass destruction and all missiles for  
 their delivery."

Clearly, ways to mitigate current crises aren't  
 lacking.

This Indo-US agreement richly deserves to be  
 derailed. The threat of  
 nuclear war is extremely serious, and growing, and  
 part of the reason  
 is that the nuclear states - led by the United States  
 - simply refuse  
 to live up to their obligations or are significantly  
 violating them,  
 this latest effort being another step toward  
 disaster.

The US Congress gets a chance to weigh in on this  
 deal after the  
 International Atomic Energy Agency and the  
 Nuclear Suppliers Group

vet it. Perhaps Congress, reflecting a citizenry fed up with nuclear gamesmanship, can reject the agreement. A better way to go forward is to pursue the need for global nuclear disarmament, recognising that the very survival of the species is at stake.

*Noam Chomsky's most recent book is*

*Interventions, a collection of his commentary pieces. Chomsky is emeritus professor of linguistics and philosophy at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.*

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