

short vers of GROUP 1 document

Nuclear Power and Nuclear Weapons

Recent crises with Iran and the DPRK illustrate the dangerous links between nuclear weapons and nuclear power and the risks of nuclear fuel-cycle technology. These issues reflect fundamental instabilities in the pillars that uphold the NPT.

Article IV's "inalienable right" to "peaceful" nuclear technology should be understood in the context of the NPT bargain, and not as a claim that it is a fundamental aspect of sovereignty. The "right" to nuclear energy, may be limited or extinguished over time by subsequent developments and agreements. The NPT Article V promise of access to the "benefits" of peaceful nuclear explosions was superseded by the abandonment of the notion of such projects as digging canals with nuclear explosive devices and by the adoption of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. Any right, must be exercised in conformity with international law, and is subject to limits based upon the health, environmental and security rights of the global community.

The Article IV "right" has enabled states to build infrastructure for producing nuclear weapons in a matter of weeks or months, under the guise of "peaceful" civilian energy. The same facilities producing low-enriched uranium fuel for energy can produce high-enriched uranium for weapons. All commercial nuclear power reactors are now producing plutonium as a by-product which can be reprocessed for use in nuclear weapons..

The nuclear industry and some governments are actively promoting nuclear power as a solution to global warming. Studies show that nuclear power is not carbon emissions free. Every step of the nuclear fuel cycle—mining, development, production, transportation and disposal of waste,—relies on fossil fuel and produces greenhouse gas emissions. Furthermore, studies conclude that nuclear power is the slowest and costliest way to reduce CO2 emissions, as financing nuclear power diverts scarce resources from investments in renewable energy and energy efficiency. The enormous costs of nuclear power per unit of carbon emissions reduced would actually worsen our ability to abate climate change as we would be buying less carbon-free energy per dollar spent on nuclear power compared to the emissions we would be save by investing those dollars in solar, wind, or energy efficiency. Moreover, the spread of nuclear power plants increases the risks of diversion of nuclear material for weapons use, theft by terrorists, or the spread of knowledge which could be employed in a clandestine nuclear bomb program. It also increases the risk of terrorist attack on reactors and their spent fuel stores. Using the enormous investments that are planned for nuclear power, to clean, safe, climate-friendly energy production and energy efficiency would be a much wiser use of resources.

Another troubling threat to the NPT's disarmament promise is the US-India nuclear energy deal. International rules and institutions derived from the NPT have prevented non-Member States from using commercial imports of nuclear technology and fuel to aid their nuclear weapons ambitions. This deal is dangerous ti tge NPT because commercial uranium imports for safeguarded reactors will free up more of India's domestic uranium for its military program, which will remain unsafeguarded and free of the necessity of IAEA inspections. The US-India deal is nothing short of a recipe by which India can increase its nuclear arsenal by hundreds of warheads over the next several years. The former head of India's official National Security Advisory Board has argued openly that "Given India's uranium ore crunch, it is to India's advantage to categorize as many power reactors as possible as civilian ones to be

refueled by imported uranium and conserve our native uranium fuel for weapons grade plutonium production."

India already has weapons grade plutonium, sufficient for roughly 100 nuclear warheads--about 11.5 tons of reactor grade plutonium in its spent fuel pools. Under the terms of the deal, this stock of plutonium, too, would be kept out of safeguards and its Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor, scheduled to start in 2010 would also be kept out of safeguards.. It will be fueled with reactor-grade plutonium and produce weapons-grade plutonium resulting in a four-fold increase in India's current weapons plutonium production rate. By substituting imports for domestic uranium and expanding existing uranium recycling efforts, India also might be able to produce up to 200 kg a year of weapon grade plutonium in its unsafeguarded power reactors.

Pakistan's response, would be predictable, as is China's. Analysts have warned that "a dramatic acceleration in the nuclear arms race in South Asia may be triggered by this deal. Such a development would be both dangerous and costly, and set back the efforts for peace and development in South Asia." The US-India deal undermines the basic principle on which the NPT was founded. If India, which developed nuclear weapons while remaining outside the NPT, is granted the same privileges as Treaty members—indeed, virtually the same privileges as the nuclear weapons states, then other countries may well ask what benefit they derive from adhering to their NPT commitments.

To come into force the US-India deal requires assent by the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) of countries. Each of the 45 NSG members, who are all parties to the NPT, must agree by consensus to change its rules and allow nuclear sales to India. We urge the NSG to uphold your NPT commitments and reject the deal and prohibit its implementation as inconsistent with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1172, adopted in June 1988, and referenced in the 2000 NPT Final Document. The Resolution, passed unanimously, asks India and Pakistan "immediately to stop their nuclear weapon development programs, to refrain from weaponization or from the deployment of nuclear weapons, to cease development of ballistic missiles capable of delivering nuclear weapons and any further production of fissile material for nuclear weapons." It also encourages all States to "prevent the export of equipment, materials or technology that could in any way assist programs in India or Pakistan for nuclear weapons." Indeed, the best course for the NSG would be to wait until NPT states parties have taken a decision on the matter, which may not occur until the 2010 Review Conference.

Rather than foster a potentially large expansion of the South Asian nuclear arms race, the NSG and all NPT signatories should reaffirm their commitment to the 2000 Review Conference statement and support the United Nations Security Council Resolution. They should try to strengthen the long-standing international effort to end all production of highly enriched uranium and plutonium to make nuclear weapons.

The dispute over Iran's nuclear program continues to escalate. In March, 2007, the Security Council adopted resolution 1747 following up on Iran's failure to implement the Council's demands in resolution 1737 to suspend its uranium enrichment and heavy water programs, dramatically increasing possibility of an armed confrontation. Despite the false sense of urgency ascribed to the Iran crisis, US intelligence officials stated recently that Iran would not likely be able to acquire a nuclear weapon until the middle of the next decade.. Meanwhile, about a dozen states in the Middle East recently expressed interested for the first time in

starting nuclear power programs, and the IAEA has agreed to assist the Gulf Cooperation Council in developing nuclear power.

The Bush administration has taken a consistently aggressive line in dealing with this situation, pushing for strong action, while simultaneously refusing to negotiate directly with Iran. Now, it seems as if the US administration, is moving toward a military solution.

Although many doubts have been expressed about the US willingness to use nuclear weapons in an attack on Iran, US policy allows for the use of nuclear weapons for exactly this kind of mission. Any military intervention by the US and its allies in Iran would certainly prompt a military response by Iran, spreading the human consequences across international borders and fueling instability across the wider Middle East. The US and Israel have both stated that "all options are on the table," and have not been willing to forswear the "nuclear option" when asked to clarify their intentions. While the NGOs assembled here believe that no military option should be on the table for addressing allegations about Iran's nuclear ambitions, the idea of a nuclear first strike against Iran is an intolerable breach of both the letter and the spirit of the NPT, and should be repudiated at this PrepCom.

The disputing parties should heed Mohamed ElBaradei's calls, for mutual and sequential confidence-building measures that would allow for a return to negotiations. There is an urgent need for a new diplomatic initiative.

The Iran situation underscores the risks associated with the unchecked spread of the nuclear fuel-cycle. Only the global phase-out of nuclear power will put this inherent and intractable proliferation risk to rest. Since the 2005 Review, we have seen the acceleration of plans for a top-down, centrally controlled Global Nuclear Energy Partnership that is nothing more than a nightmare scenario of plutonium in constant transit, subject to terrorist theft and negligent accidents on land and on sea. Regardless of where nuclear fuel production facilities are located they bring with them the fear and possibility of weapons proliferation and ultimately represent a formidable roadblock on the path to elimination of nuclear weapons. The continued existence of nationally based nuclear fuel-cycle facilities and the system of nuclear apartheid embodied in the GNEP would be formidable barriers to the verifiability of a nuclear-weapons-free world. But, any scheme that seeks to mitigate the risk posed by nuclear fuel-cycle technology, such as the proposals for multilateral controls suggested by Mohamed ElBaradei, could exacerbate these problems by spreading knowledge and equipment that could be used in clandestine programs or in a breakout scenario.

We must guard against the prevalent scientific machismo where scientific and technological elites in are pushing the agenda for this lethal technology. Interestingly, in US President Eisenhower's noted farewell address in which he warned about the dangers of the military-industry complex, he also cautioned against the abuse of science, warning that: "In holding scientific research and discovery in respect, as we should, we must also be alert to the equal and opposite danger that public policy could itself becomes the captive of a scientific-technological elite."ⁱⁱ

As we meet in Vienna to recognize the 50th anniversary of the International Atomic Energy Agency, we wish to draw attention to the IAEA's dual mission to prevent proliferation, while promoting "peaceful" nuclear technology.. We commend the Agency for its useful role in guarding against proliferation.. Nevertheless, its schizophrenic mission undermines those efforts leaving the IAEA susceptible to undue influence by the nuclear industry. Having

recently commemorated the 20th anniversary of the Chernobyl tragedy, we are particularly disturbed that, to this day, the numbers of deaths, cancers, and other illnesses attributable to the world's worst nuclear reactor disaster have been understated in official publications of the IAEA and WHO..

Confronting the risk posed by the proliferation of "peaceful" nuclear technology must be placed on a par with the reduction and elimination of nuclear weapons. **As a permanent solution, we support the establishment of an International Sustainable Energy Agency, and a transfer of the current subsidies for nuclear energy and fossil fuel development—about \$250 billion per year—to fund the new Agency with a crash program to build a universal and non-discriminatory global energy system based on clean, efficient, and renewable energy sources. NPT PrepComs and Reviews would be useful platforms for the exploration of such alternatives.**

ⁱ (Storm van Leeuwen, J.W and Philip Smith. Nuclear Power: the Energy Balance. The CO2 Emission of the Nuclear Life-Cycle. 2005. www.stormsmith.nl/Chap_1CO-2_emission_of_the_nuclear_fuel_cycle.PDF)

ⁱⁱ Eisenhower, Dwight D. Farewell Address. January 17, 1961. www.independent.org/issues/article.asp?id=1133