

(Unofficial translation)

## **Japan should support US-India Nuclear Cooperation**

### **A special appeal by a group of concerned Japanese (undersigned)**

Japan's position as the only country that has been the victim of the atomic bombs is the focus of international attention in the on-going discussions over civil nuclear energy cooperation between the United States and India, a non signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

At the special general meeting of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) held in Vienna late August, discussion was split over "India-specific exemption", and no conclusion was reached on the issue. With the next special session of the NSG is expected for early September, the Japanese Government must promptly decide its own stance.

There are wide-ranging views on this issue among the member countries of NSG. Some say it will have a negative impact on the maintenance of global non-proliferation regime, sending wrong signals to Iran, North Korea and the like. Others say it will have a positive effect by involving India in international non-proliferation efforts, while contributing to India's growing energy demand on one hand and the reduction in CO2 emissions on the other.

In Japan, in addition to certain peace and anti-nuclear activist groups who are strongly opposed, the major media are largely dismissive also. However, it seems the tone of these arguments is somewhat too one-sided. For example, one of the leading newspapers argues in its recent editorial that India's exemption would serve as a bad precedent and there is a danger that the tear in the NPT regime will spread, possibly entailing "nuclear domino" in the rest of the world. We do not share such view altogether.

Those responsible for the weakening NPT regime are none other than the five nuclear-weapon States (US, Russia, Great Britain, France and China) which have shown no sign of abandoning their nuclear weapons even after the end of the Cold War. The nuclear issues involving Iran and North Korea that pause headache to the international community at the moment, serious as they are, are not necessarily the

direct results of the weakening NPT regime, and can only be dealt with outside such regime, like the current 6-Party Talk over the North Korean problem.

India has consistently refused, and continues to refuse, to join the NPT for the obvious reason that the treaty is intrinsically discriminatory. India has conducted two nuclear tests in the past. However, from the point of view of nuclear non-proliferation, she has a clean, some say impeccable, record unrivaled by any of the nuclear-weapon States or, for that matter, by any State. This is repeatedly acknowledged by the Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Presumably, with the exception of Japan, India has been advocating nuclear abolition for the longest in the world. It is a historic fact that after WWII, the first Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru, spearheaded the international nuclear disarmament movement centering the United Nations.

The reason why India has had to embark on nuclear weapons development of her own is largely because its neighbour, China, which made India suffer defeat many times in the border disputes, conducted a nuclear test in 1964. China is authorized to develop and possess nuclear weapons under the NPT, and is still steadily building up its nuclear capability. India's other neighbour, Pakistan, is also arming itself with nuclear weapons, thus intensifying confrontation on the Indian subcontinent.

If Japan were in a similar situation, she might have been forced to go nuclear herself. Being the only victim of the atomic bombs, however, Japan, firmly committed to being nuclear-free, established the "Three Non-nuclear Principles" in 1969 as her national policy and decided instead to rely on the extended deterrence (so-called "nuclear umbrella") of her ally, US., and joined the NPT after soul-searching national debates in the 1960s and 70s.

Thirty years have passed since, and most people in Japan today, as if having forgotten such historical facts, tend to denounce India's position on nuclear issues. Is it not necessary for Japanese to stand once in a while, on the same footing as India and try to think realistically?

Moreover, India has consistently been friendly towards Japan since the Meiji era and emphatically encouraged Japanese in many ways during the chaotic period

immediately after the WWII. Looking into the future, Japan and India are expected to work together as strategic partners to realize peace and prosperity in Asia.

Having stated so, however, we do not believe that Japan should support India's exemption unconditionally. Even if India continues to stay outside the NPT, (1) she should make her utmost efforts in preventing nuclear proliferation individually or collectively; (2) she should continue to keep her promise not to resume nuclear tests at any time in the future, *unless* the neighbouring countries conduct nuclear tests first; (3) she should ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) when all the nuclear weapon States have done so.

Furthermore, Japan, for her part, should take this opportunity to demand that all nuclear powers, including China, strengthen their genuine efforts towards the elimination of nuclear weapons pursuant to Article 6 of the NPT.

Upon so declaring, Japan should render her support to the US-India Nuclear Cooperation at the next session of the NSG.

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Signed by:

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And about 10 other concerned Japanese including former ambassadors, professors, nuclear experts.