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For Immediate Release
Office of the Press Secretary
March 8, 2006

India Civil Nuclear Cooperation: Responding to Critics

CRITICS: The U.S.-India civil nuclear cooperation deal will accelerate the nuclear arms race in South Asia.

COUNTERPOINT: This is an historic agreement that brings India into the nonproliferation mainstream and addresses its growing energy needs through increased use of nuclear energy in cooperation with the international community. The United States has no intention of aiding India's nuclear weapons program. India's plan to separate its civilian and military nuclear facilities and programs will allow other nations to cooperate with India's civilian facilities to expand energy production. Those facilities will be under International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards to prevent diversion of technology and materials to India's military program. Greater use of nuclear reactors to produce energy for the Indian people will not undermine regional security or stability.

CRITICS: Doesn't this initiative effectively recognize India as a nuclear weapons state?

COUNTERPOINT: No, the United States has not recognized India as a nuclear weapons state. The 1968 Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) defines a nuclear weapons state as "one which has manufactured and exploded a nuclear weapon or other nuclear explosive device prior to January 1, 1967." (The United States, UK, France, Russia, and China exploded nuclear devices prior to that date.) India does not meet this definition, and we do not seek to amend the Treaty.

CRITICS: Only 14 of India's 22 nuclear power reactors will be safeguarded under its separation plan, and India's two developmental fast breeder reactors will remain unsafeguarded. With these facilities, India can produce enough nuclear weapons to significantly expand its current arsenal.

COUNTERPOINT: The understanding we have reached with India will significantly increase the number of Indian nuclear reactors under IAEA safeguards, as well as bring associated facilities under safeguards. At present, only four of India's nuclear power reactors are under safeguards. Under its civil-military separation plan, India has agreed to place the majority of its existing nuclear power reactors and those under construction under safeguards and to place the other associated upstream and downstream facilities that support those reactors under safeguards. Furthermore, India has committed to place all future civilian power and fast breeder reactors under safeguards.

This agreement is good for American security because it will bring India's civilian nuclear program into the international nonproliferation mainstream. The agreement also is good for the American economy because it will help meet India's surging energy needs - and that will lessen India's growing demand for

other energy supplies and help restrain energy prices for American consumers.

CRITICS: Doesn't this initiative create a double standard and won't it encourage rogue nations like North Korea and Iran to continue to pursue nuclear weapons programs?

COUNTERPOINT: It is not credible to compare the rogue regimes of North Korea and Iran to India. Unlike Iran or North Korea, India has been a peaceful and vibrant democracy with a strong nuclear nonproliferation record.

Under this initiative, India - which has never been a party to the NPT - has agreed to take a series of steps that will bring it into the international nonproliferation mainstream.

Iran and North Korea are very different cases. They signed and ratified the NPT and gave lip service to adhering to their international obligations. Through their covert actions, however, they broke the very nonproliferation commitments they claimed to follow. Additionally, both regimes have isolated themselves from the international community and are state sponsors of terrorism.

India, on the other hand, has agreed to take steps that will bring it into the nonproliferation mainstream, including:

- Placing its civilian nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards and monitoring;
- Signing and implementing an Additional Protocol, which allows more extensive inspections by the IAEA;
- Ensuring that its nuclear materials and technologies are secured and prevented from diversion, including its recent passage of a law to create a robust national export control system;
- Refraining from transfers of enrichment and reprocessing technologies to states that do not already possess them and supporting efforts to limit their spread;
- Working to conclude a Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty;
- Continuing its moratorium on nuclear testing; and
- Adhering to the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) and the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) guidelines.

CRITICS: This initiative will weaken or unravel the global nonproliferation regime. Creating an exception for India will lead Pakistan and Israel, who are also outside the NPT regime, to insist on a similar deal or cause other nations to withdraw from the Treaty.

COUNTERPOINT: India has stood outside the global nonproliferation regime for the last 30 years. Through this initiative, India will enter the international nonproliferation mainstream, thereby strengthening the regime that continues to play a vital role in enhancing international security and stability.

All nations that are party to the NPT are permitted full access to nuclear technology for peaceful purposes but are prohibited from pursuing or possessing nuclear weapons (except for the five recognized nuclear weapons states). We do not expect nations to withdraw from the NPT. Any move to withdraw from the NPT would clearly signal a nation's intent to pursue nuclear weapons and would

result in the loss of access to nuclear technology for peaceful purposes.

Pakistan and India are different countries with different needs and different histories. Our relationship with Pakistan, which has Major Non-NATO Ally status, follows a separate path that reflects our countries' strong commitment to maintaining close ties and cooperation, including in the War on Terror. However, Pakistan does not have the same nonproliferation record as India, nor the same energy needs. We do not intend to pursue a similar civil nuclear cooperation initiative with Pakistan.

The status of Israel is not comparable to that of India. Israel has not declared itself to be a nuclear power, nor articulated such extraordinary energy needs. As for other Middle Eastern countries, we expect all NPT parties to live up to their treaty obligations.

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