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## India is, no longer the Guru, only a military state



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A lot of people didn't understand the hurry that Manmohan Singh was in in taking the safeguards agreement to International Atomic Energy Agency and requesting the United States President to pursue the matter with Nuclear Suppliers' Group. Even those who support the Indo-US nuclear deal are perplexed by the urgency demonstrated by the government. Manmohan Singh was willing to put at stake his prime ministership, his government and the party as well as the country for the sake of the deal. He annoyed his left supporters and forced a motion of confidence which he won not in a very dignified manner.

The Indian government has got the approval of International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on the safeguards agreement expectedly quite smoothly. If Manmohan Singh is able to drive this deal through Nuclear Suppliers' Group (NSG) and the US Congress the second time, it'll be a virtual coup for him. He would have achieved what no other country on earth has been able to do so far.

He would have obtained the rights for India to engage in nuclear commerce with the 45 member NSG countries without signing on the nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT). It doesn't matter that the US and the rest of the world doesn't recognize India formally as a Nuclear Weapons State under the NPT. He would walk away without having committed India to nuclear disarmament.

It is to be noted that the big five, the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, officially described as Nuclear Weapon States (NWS) under NPT are committed to nuclear disarmament, at least formally. The remaining countries which are signatories of NPT are anyway prohibited from making nuclear weapons. Pakistan and Israel , the only other non-signatories besides India , are also not officially committed to nuclear disarmament but then they are denied the benefit of nuclear commerce. Hence India will enjoy the unique status of a respectable member of the group of countries engaged in nuclear commerce with each other but without committing itself to nuclear disarmament. This is the diplomatic success of Manmohan Singh and a lot of countries are amazed that he has had his way violating the non-proliferation regime in place. He would like to consider this as his achievement and wants the due credit for it. This is why he wants to seal the deal during his present tenure.

It may be a personal achievement for Manmohan Singh. But what does it mean for the people and the country? Having obtained the status, even if informally, of a nuclear weapons state, India will seek to further stockpile. The nuclear power plants outside the IAEA safeguards will be used to add to India's nuclear arsenal. This will fuel another round of arms race with Pakistan and possibly with China as well. Precious resources of the country will be dedicated to arms build up.

India has traditionally been seen as a harbinger of peace. As recently as in 1995, India's representative at the International Court of Justice described nuclear deterrence as 'abhorrent to human sentiment since it implies that a state if required to defend its own existence will act with pitiless disregard for the consequences to its own and adversary's people.'

Jawahar Lal Nehru had spurned an American offer to conduct nuclear test on India soil with American devices to preempt the Chinese nuclear test. Even though Indira Gandhi conducted the nuclear tests in 1974, Rajiv Gandhi was still seriously pursuing the cause of nuclear disarmament in the United Nations in 1988. India had taken a principled position against the discriminatory Non Proliferation Treaty and was hoping that the big five - the US , UK , Russia , France and China - would give a time bound commitment towards global nuclear disarmament.


However, the US , has now stopped surreptitiously talking about disarmament. The new phraseology is 'non-proliferation.' It is a euphemism for the continuing hegemony of the US called the 'new global order.' And slowly the world leaders have started trumpeting the idea of non-proliferation, abandoning the ideal of nuclear disarmament. The countries have either voluntarily or under coercion joined the non-proliferation order. India had resisted this design valiantly as the leader of the Non-Aligned Movement not until long back. However, with the Indo-US nuclear deal, the US thinks that India had been brought into the non-proliferation regime through the back door.

Even our political parties, like the Congress, the Communists and the Socialists, who have been traditional supporters of the idea of global nuclear disarmament have been forced by the US and its right wing allies in India, the

Hindutva forces, in this debate, to take right wing position of maintaining the option to carry out nuclear tests in future and thereby increase India's nuclear and other arsenals in the name of national security. They are either now paying only lip service to the ideal of nuclear disarmament or have subscribed to the new paradigm of non-proliferation.

So, India , from a position of the leader of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) , advocating nuclear disarmament and global peace, fighting the US dominance, has now climbed down to be merely an ally of the only remaining super power. She was earlier a spiritual guru to the world and champion of peace. Now she is just a military power, that too a very mediocre one. She has an ambition to be in the league of security council members, but her vast majority of poor population, living on the verge of starvation and possible suicide deaths pull her down to be face to face with the reality.

While the Indian Parliament builds a nuclear bunker for itself, majority of the villagers live without electricity. From a strong believer in the concept of self-reliance we now seek dependence on others which is described as ending India 's technological isolation. Subjugation to the world power is being portrayed as India achieving its long overdue place in the comity of nations. India 's leaders think that they will be able to retain country's sovereignty and not let it degenerate into a banana republic. In reality, our position will be nothing more than a second rate UK or Israel .

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