



### Indian Membership of the Nuclear Supplier Group: An Appraisal

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#### Abstract:

In 1974, India surprised the world with a nuclear test; depicting that non-weapons specific nuclear technology could be used to develop an atomic bomb. Consequently, in 1975, the Nuclear Supplier Group (NSG) was established to regulate trade of nuclear materials and technology. Nevertheless, this did not prove to be an obstacle in India's way to become a nuclear power, as on May 11, 1998, it achieved its set goal. Soon after, India begun its quest to become a NSG member. The United States (US) supported India's bid terming it to be a responsible nuclear-weapon state and a like-minded country. Resultantly, in 2008, the NSG issued a special waiver to India allowing it access to civil nuclear technology. Though, both India and the US considered this waiver to be nothing more than a steppingstone to become a full member; thus, since then they have accelerated their efforts to attain the set objective. Should India get through the NSG membership as an exception? This paper critically analyzes India's case to be a NSG member and its implications on the region in general and Pakistan in particular.

**Keywords:** South Asia, India, Pakistan, Indo-US Nexus, nuclear non-proliferation, nuclear supplier group

#### INTRODUCTION

On May 18, 1974, India surprised the world by conducting a nuclear test, especially those states which were a strong advocate of promoting nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, energy in particular. India's nuclear test was the first breach of the nuclear non-proliferation safeguards placed under the United States' (US) Atomic Energy Act of 1954, commonly known as Atoms for Peace initiative, launched by the then US President, Dwight Eisenhower, in which states gave certain commitments to have access to nuclear material/technology. Consequently, the US and Canada, which provided India with nuclear plant and fuel, declared termination of any nuclear assistance to India (Haass & Halperin 1998, 39; Trumbull, 1974).

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The incident exposed deficiencies in the safeguard procedures of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Thus, in 1975, the Nuclear Supplier Group (NSG) was established to regulate the spread of sensitive goods and technologies in all states through informal arrangements that relies on a set of guidelines that are agreed upon through consensus (Kimball & Davenport, 2022). All the NSG states voluntarily coordinated their activities to achieve the objectives of the Group. Nevertheless, India again violated nuclear non-proliferation regimes by conducting nuclear tests on May 11 and 13 1998. India's nuclear tests created a huge security dilemma for Pakistan; thus, compelled it to leave the policy of nuclear ambiguity and conduct its own nuclear tests on May 28 and 30, 1998. Consequently, transforming the South Asian region as the only nuclear flash point in the world.

The Indian quest for NSG membership started long before it came to eminence. It has its roots in the Greater India notion. The conclusion of the Indo-US Strategic Partnership (2005) meant that now the US would be the strongest advocate of India to become a member of the NSG. The US meticulously crafted the narrative of India being a responsible nuclear weapon state; thus, insisted that India measured up to the scales of being termed as a likeminded country in nuclear parleys and publicized it at all relevant fora. Resultantly, in 2008, India was given a special waiver by the NSG allowing her access to civil nuclear technology (Kumara & Jayasekera, 2008).

However, neither India nor the US was satisfied with merely a special waiver by the NSG; thus, the US vehemently continued to advocate a full NSG member status for India. Should India get through the NSG membership as an exception, it will not only unleash host of complications for the region, but also create a strategic dilemma for Pakistan.

The confluence of Indo-US interests, though fulfilled their individual agendas, but have far reaching implications for Pakistan in the region and globally. This paper critically analyzes India's case to be a NSG member and its implications on the region in general and Pakistan in particular.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

On July 16, 1946, the United States (US) became the world's first nuclear power by successfully conducting the Trinity Test. Only a month after, the US dropped atomic bombs on two Japanese cities' Hiroshima (August 06, 1945) and Nagasaki (August 09, 1945). Following suit, the Soviet Union (USSR) successfully conducted its nuclear test on August 01, 1949; Great Britain on October 01, 1952; France on January 01, 1960; and China on October 01, 1964.

Soon after the US nuclear attack on Japan, the first attempt to carve a nuclear order was made by the Harry S. Truman, the then US President, when he asserted that the US alone "must constitute ourselves trustees of this new force to prevent its misuse" (Truman, 1945a); thus, instructed the Department of State to formulate a plan for its control. As early as November 1945, the US President, United Kingdom (UK) Prime Minister and the Prime Minister of Canada issued a joint declaration calling for the creation of a commission under the United Nations (UN) to make specific proposals aimed at controlling atomic energy (Truman, 1945b).

In 1956, a report presented to the US Secretary of State cited the destructive power of nuclear weapons, impossibility of military defense against them, and inevitability of their proliferation, as reasons for seeking international control (Bernard et al., 1946, 60.). Consequently, in June 1946, the Baruch Plan was put forward to the UN Atomic Energy Commission proposing creation of a global

atomic development authority that would oversee the peaceful use of atomic energy. The Plan called for elimination of nuclear weapons once "an adequate system of control [became] fully effective" ("the Baruch Plan," 1946). The plan failed as the USSR objected to the plan's implicit recognition of the US monopoly on the nuclear weapons.

Despite early setbacks, the US continued its efforts for non-proliferation of nuclear weapons' technology. One way of doing that was to promote the peaceful use of nuclear technology. The US President Eisenhower, in his Atoms for Peace speech (1953), envisioned the peaceful use of atomic energy for the betterment of mankind. Eisenhower, once again, put forward the idea that under the umbrella of the UN an atomic energy agency must be established that "would devise methods whereby this fissionable material would be allocated to serve the peaceful pursuits of mankind" (Eisenhower, 1953).

Finally, in 1957, IAEA was created. Its goal was to "accelerate and enlarge the contribution of atomic energy to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world" ("The Statute of the IAEA," 2014). To date, the IAEA is the only international organization (with 175 members) dealing with peaceful use of nuclear science and technology.

Furthermore, Ireland was the first country to recognize that to safeguard global peace and stability it was imperative to impose a stringent ban on the transfer of nuclear weapons technology. Thus, it tabled three successive resolutions in the UN General Assembly (UNGA); 1959, 1960 and 1961, all of which more or less called all states to agree to stop the wider dissemination of nuclear weapons (Chossudovsky, 1990). Soon after, in 1965, building upon the Irish proposals while adding a role of the IAEA, the US submitted the first draft of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) to the Eighteen Nation Disarmament Committee (ENDC) ("Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty [NPT] Background," n.d.). A month later, the USSR too presented its draft to the UNGA. The Soviet draft was also built on the Irish resolutions ("Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty [NPT] Background," n.d.). Resultantly, in 1968, after rigorously negotiating within ENDC and numerous revisions, the NPT was opened for signature (Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty [NPT] Background, n.d.). Finally, in 1970, it came into force (Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty [NPT] Background, n.d.). The NPT emerged as a grand bargain between nuclear non-nuclear weapons countries and nuclear weapons countries; where the former renounced their quest for nuclear weapons in exchange for getting access to nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, whereas latter were obligated to work toward general and complete disarmament ("Treaty on the Non-Proliferation," n.d.).

Strikingly, India's nuclear test made it evident to the world that states could transform the non-weapons specific nuclear technology into atomic bombs. Thus, in May 1974, to limit and control the export of nuclear materials, equipment, or technology, the Nuclear Supplier Group (NSG) was founded. From 1975 to 1978, a series of meetings resulted in agreements on the rules vis-à-vis export of nuclear material, which was then published by the IAEA. As per the set rules, only non-nuclear states could be exported the listed items if they agreed to certain IAEA safeguards. Later, in 1991, in the backdrop of the revelations about the Iraqi weapons program, the NSG further tightened the export of dual-use nuclear equipment.

Ever since its creation, the NSG has been actively contributing to nuclear non-proliferation. This is done by regulating the spread of sensitive goods and technologies in all states through an informal arrangement that relies on a set of guidelines that are agreed upon through consensus. Its

members, which now stand at 48 states, voluntarily coordinate their activities to achieve the objective of the group.

Soon after becoming a nuclear power, the Indian obsession of attaining a dominating role in the regional and global arena was now openly professed by the Indian leadership. This ambition coupled with the US interests in the region, containing the rise of China, proved to be a common ground to bolster India both politically and militarily, particularly under the US' Pivot to Asia strategy (Schiavenza, 2013). It is evident that the Western powers, particularly the US, has been fairly lenient towards India in regard to its nuclear program, despite the fact that India has been found in violation of international protocols on several occasions (Haass & Halperin, 1998; Trumbull, 1974). Without any doubt India was the aggressor vis-à-vis testing its nuclear bomb in South Asia, Pakistan reacted/retaliated to ensure its deterrence, however, the US in particular and the West in general imposed similar socio-economic sanctions on both states (Haass & Halperin, 1998). From this point onwards, clearly a preferential treatment was given to India by the US; it being a comprehensive nuclear deal (Jaspal, 2008), or a special waiver by the by the NSG allowing her access to civil nuclear technology (Kumara & Jayasekera, 2008), while repeated similar request of Pakistan were declined. Moreover, intentionally, the West has created a nuclear asymmetry in South Asia; which in the longer run will cause political turmoil in the region. Lastly, a deficiency in the available literature was visible; a clear biased vis-à-vis India.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

A qualitative approach has been adopted to conduct this study. The qualitative techniques; content analysis, discourse analysis and comparative analysis, were employed in tandem to carry out a systematic study. The deductive method of reasoning was implemented to create a broad understanding of the undertaken phenomena. Furthermore, the study is based upon primarily secondary data; extracted from research papers, books and internet sources, given the dearth of accessible primary data.

## **UNDERSTANDING INDIA'S QUEST FOR THE NSG MEMBERSHIP**

To understand the significance of India's NSG membership campaign and its implications, one must first comprehend the genesis of Indian nuclear program, its non-proliferation credentials, and the Indo-US nuclear deal.

### **Launch of Indian Nuclear Program**

In 1945, with the creation of Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, India began its efforts in nuclear science and technology (Gopalakrishnan, 2002). Soon after, in 1948, Jawaharlal Nehru, the then Indian Prime Minister, declared openly India's nuclear ambitions, "we must develop this atomic energy quite apart from war – indeed I think we must develop it for the purpose of using it for peaceful purposes.....Of course, if we are compelled as a nation to use it for other purposes, possibly no pious sentiments of any of us will stop the nation from using it that way" (Perkovich, 2001, 20).

In 1955, under the famous Atom for Peace program, Canada supplied nuclear reactor to India for which heavy water was provided by the US (Eganspecial, 1955). In the succeeding years, India secretly diverted the technology and material from energy related program to weapon production.

Resultantly, on May 17, 1974, India stunned the entire world by successfully conducting a nuclear bomb test – Smiling Buddha.

The international community condemned India's action. More importantly, India no longer received assistance for development of nuclear technology. Though, this did not stop India, it continued to develop its nuclear weapons program. Resultantly, in May 1998, at Pokhran, India successfully detonated five nuclear tests, once again reverberating the world in general and the region in particular. These nuclear tests brought about a fundamental change in the power equation in the sub-continent by introducing a new element in the strategic balance, which till that time, was built around conventional forces.

India's nuclear doctrines are based upon the collective philosophy of Gandhi and Nehru; envisioning a Greater India (Khan, 2003). The slogan Greater India, originally envisaged by Nehru, meant that sooner rather than later it was inevitable that India would emerge as a great power and play a proactive role in world geopolitical affairs. Thus, India had to acquire nuclear weapons technology. Other contributing factors that motivated Indian nuclear ambitions included; its historic rivalry with Pakistan and China; and its aspiration to regulate, orient and reconstruct regional security apparatus particularly, and influence the international security apparatus generally. On the other hand, India's nuclear non-Proliferation credentials of India have never been impressive. Indian Defence Ministry's statement in 1996, sums up its stance; "India stands for the total elimination of all nuclear weapons and ushering in of a nuclear weapons free world. However, till such time as this is achieved, India will be constrained to keep her nuclear option open" (Government of India 2019, 244).

### **The Indo-US Nuclear Deal**

The year 2005 turned out to be a historic moment in the US and India relations. During the visit of the US President George W. Bush to India, the Henry J. Hyde United States-India Peaceful Atomic Energy Cooperation Act of 2006, comprising 123 agreements, was inked. Key contours of the Indo-US nuclear deal include;

- India will separate its military and civilian nuclear facilities
- 14 of 22 indigenous Indian power reactors will be placed under an India specific safeguards agreement (6 are already under safeguards)
- Future power reactors installed by India for civil purposes will also be placed under safeguards
- India adheres to the NSG guidelines and Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR)

The Indo-US nuclear deal meant that no barriers were there for the US to help India develop its civilian nuclear technology, it could deal with India as if it was dealing with the recognized five nuclear powers. Also, this nuclear deal greatly empowered India as now it could freely access US nuclear technology and guaranteed steady flow of nuclear fuel. More importantly, it bestowed India the prestigious status of a de-facto nuclear weapon state as well as certified it as a responsible state vis-à-vis nuclear proliferation. In addition, the Indo-US nuclear deal to significantly buildup its nuclear materials stockpile, which, in turn, adversely affected the region's stability in general and South Asia's in particular.

Over the years, India's nuclear weapons program was constrained due to limited uranium supply. Nuclear analysts predicted that by the year 2007 India's stockpile would be exhausted. The NSG restrictions imposed on India made it virtually impossible for it to import uranium for its reactors.



Annually India needed at least 400 tons of uranium to operate its power reactors at 75 percent capacity. Whereas it could indigenously produce less than 300 tons per annum, considerably less than its requirements. The Indo-US nuclear deal proved to be a blessing for India, it guaranteed unrestricted access to international uranium market; not only enabling India enough fuel to operate its civilian power reactors to generate energy, but also and more importantly freed up its indigenous uranium production to be directed towards military uses, ensuring strengthening of its nuclear arsenal.

### **Indian Quest for the NSG Membership**

Indeed, the Indo-US nuclear deal was a steppingstone for the NSG Membership. As in June 2008, India applied for the NSG membership and shortly after, in September 2008, it was granted a special waiver by the NSG, which permitted Indian access to nuclear fuel and technology from other states, without giving it rights to vote in the NSG meetings. Now, India was the only state that could carry out nuclear trade even though it was not a party to the NPT.

After getting the waiver, India accelerated its efforts to secure a full NSG membership by globally depicting its nuclear credentials. In 2009, during the visit of Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, the US President Barack Obama acknowledged India as a natural ally and ensured timely action on the Indo-US nuclear agreement ("Remarks by President Obama," 2009). Shortly after, in 2010, during President Obama's visit to New Delhi he officially announced the US support for India to become a member of the multilateral export control regimes. Resultantly, an internal structured dialogue for India's NSG membership was established. The US, its close allies, and India all joined forces to pave the way for admitting India into the NSG. The plan was to first induct India into the MTCR, which it was in June 2016 (Parameswaran, 2016), then the NSG, and in the end other conventional weapons control arrangements. However, the internal structured dialogue efforts could not materialize due to the fact that it was far difficult to give a full membership to a state than granting a special waiver.

### **India's Rationale for Seeking the NSG Membership**

- Becoming a NSG member would mean the world had recognized India as a nuclear weapons state (Paul et al., 2014). Also, providing the Indian nuclear program a legal foundation. Thus, greatly boosting India's international political profile and strategic clout.
- India's clean non-proliferation record made it the perfect candidate for the NSG membership (Nayan, 2013)
- By becoming a NSG member, India will ensure a stable pipeline to fulfill its burgeoning demand of nuclear fuel and technology for its nuclear program.
- Becoming a member of the NSG will help India improve its nuclear technology, therefore, increasing its nuclear program's efficacy.
- India aspires to become a great power; thus, it must be a member of the NSG, as it will help ascend from the category of international rule-adhering state to international rule-creating state.
- The NSG will help India boost its nuclear commerce and trade industry.
- If India becomes a NSG member, it can effectively block Pakistan entry into the prestigious group.

On the contrary, there exists a viewpoint within the Indian policymaking circles that India should not seek full membership of the NSG. If India becomes a NSG member, it would pressurize India to

become party to nuclear non-proliferation agreements like NPT and Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which India does not wish to undertake. The special waiver granted to India covers all items in the NSG lists and more importantly has no expiration date.

### **US Supporting India's Bid to Become a NSG Member**

After President Obama publicly supported India's bid for the NSG membership, in 2010, both states began a proactive diplomatic campaign to achieve the set objectives ("Joint Statement," 2010). Resultantly, in 2011's plenary meeting of the NSG, the US tried to address objections of several of the NSG members about inducting a non-NPT state as a member. Subsequently, in 2015's plenary meeting of the forum, the US presented a paper which advocated India's case to become a NSG member and suggested methods to induct it as a member.

The US built its case to induct India as a member of the NSG premised upon the argument that India's commitment to nuclear non-proliferation norms and its record makes it a like-minded state. At the end of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modis' visit to the US (2014), a joint-statement was issued in which the US President Obama reiterated that India was ready to become a member of the NSG. Shortly after, prior to the plenary meeting of the NSG to be held in Seoul, John Kirby, the US State Department Spokesman stated that, "The United States calls on Nuclear Suppliers Group participating governments to support India's application when it comes up at the NSG plenary" (Iqbal, 2016).

More importantly, the US vehemently advocates and supports India's bid to become a NSG member as it serves the broader geostrategic interests of the US. Specifically, transforming India as a counterweight in the region; which, in turn, will help curb and contain China's rise. Thus, a win-win situation for both the US and India. Moreover, India's inclusion in the NSG will help open a new though lucrative market for the US.

### **Reaction of NSG States to India's Bid**

In 2008, India was fairly easily granted a special waiver by the NSG, though its subsequent efforts to be inducted as a member has received mix responses. The biggest obstacle in the Indian bid remains to be the fact that it is not a signatory to the NPT, a concern voiced by many existing NSG members. Despite the fact that the US threw all its weight behind India's bid, it was unable to secure a seat for India in the NSG.

Primarily China and a few other members blocked India's bid stating that it would only be considered after the group devises rules for membership of non-NPT states ("Ahead of NSG Meet," 2016). In 2016, on the sidelines of the BRICS summit, Indian Prime Minister Modi tried to persuade the Chinese President Xi; however, China remained non-committal. Undoubtedly, the Chinese stance vis-à-vis India was favorable for Pakistan; though China never advocated for Pakistan. On the contrary, Turkey openly stated that both Pakistan and India should be inducted as NSG members. As the rules to add non-NPT states as members of the NSG are yet to be finalized; thus, in the proceeding NSG plenary meeting India's case was not placed as an item on the agenda.

The geostrategic environment greatly drives the position adopted by NSG members. When the voting pattern of 2008's waiver given to India and the subsequent plenary meetings are compared, an explicit link is established between the geostrategic environment and voting pattern of members. Hence, the stance of states is not permanent, but may change with time and shift in the

geostrategic environment. Based upon views of members of the NSG for India's membership to NSG, states can be broadly divided into three groups:

### **First Group**

States belonging to this group unconditionally supported India's bid to become a member of the NSG.

- **The US**

The US support primarily stems from its long-term strategic interests with India vis-à-vis the region; to contain China's rise, the convoluted Afghan conflict, and geo-economics, owing the huge Indian market.

- **Russia**

Russia supported India's bid for the NSG membership owing its longstanding strategic ties; India being a major importer of Russian arms and ammunition, and its economic interests.

- **European Union, South Korea, Scandinavian Countries, and Estonia.**

These states favor India's bid to become a member of the NSG, largely being closely aligned to US; thus, more or less they are always towing the line.

### **Second Group**

States belonging to this group vehemently opposed India's bid to become a member of the NSG.

They opposed India's admittance on the following basis;

- First, a criteria must be pre-determined regarding the expansion of the group, then following that set criteria states bid must be assessed and decided.
- The criteria for new entrant must include;
  - The state must preferably be a party to the NPT. If not, then at least party to a nuclear weapon free zone treaty.
  - The state must have a proven capability to supply goods listed in the NSG guidelines.
  - The state must guarantee that nuclear export control regimes will be implemented in true letter and spirit as well as the NSG rules.

Strikingly, there exists a subdivision within this group;

- Countries that endorsed India's bid as a NSG member but also insisted upon establishing a criteria-based system. These included: Belgium, Switzerland, Mexico, Kazakhstan, Latvia, South Africa, Poland, and Bulgaria.
- Countries that insisted that prior to even discussing to add another state to the NSG, a criteria-based system must be devised. These included: Turkey, Brazil, China, New Zealand, Austria, Norway, Italy, and Ireland.

### **Third Group**

States belonging to this group remained silent and did not express their position vis-à-vis granting India as the NSG membership. This group comprised 12 countries, which in principal supported a criteria-based system for expanding the NSG.



### **Pakistan's Case for NSG Membership**

In May 2016, Pakistan formally filed its application for NSG membership, though, in 2004, Pakistan promulgated its Export Control Act and has been updating its NSG compliance list. A year later, in 2005, Pakistan declared its NSG compliance list. In 2007 and 2012, two successive reviews were made in Pakistan's NSG compliance list; clearly depicting that Pakistan began its endeavors to become a NSG member long before India. In 2010, in the Nuclear Security Summit Pakistan advocated its case to become a member of the NSG and other multilateral export control regimes by presenting its strong non-proliferation credentials.

Over the years, Pakistan has been proactively conducting diplomatic efforts to win the support of the international nuclear community to be a party to multilateral export control regimes, such as the Australia Group, MTCR and NSG. Pakistan wanting to be a part of these control regimes, especially the NSG, highlights the country's commitment to nuclear non-proliferation. Furthermore, in comparison to India, Pakistan has a solid record in defending and promoting non-proliferation; India has repeatedly violated exports control, security, and safety. The only irresponsible act of Pakistan was to successfully test its nuclear weapons; that too it was compelled as India, its archrival, successfully tested its nuclear weapons; thus, posing an existential threat to Pakistan, especially after India's role in the dismemberment of Pakistan in 1971.

Pakistan, though an aspirant to become a member of the NSG, also agreed to the viewpoint that there must be a set criteria to add non-NPT states as members to the NSG. The position has yielded positive results vis-à-vis Pakistan's image in the eyes of the international community. Also, it has helped deter any India-specific exemption, which, in turn, would adversely affect the geostrategic stability in South Asia particularly, and the overall future of non-proliferation regimes generally. Thus, even though the US President Barack Obama and the US Secretary of State John Kerry phoned several key members of the NSG to support India's bid prior to the NSG's 2016 plenary meeting, they were unable to persuade them.

### **Pakistan's Stance vis-à-vis the NSG Membership**

- The NSG should adopt a non-discriminatory criteria-based system to admit new members (Ahmad, 2014). Such a system would ensure the objectivity and transparency of the whole process.
- If the NSG continues to outrightly favor a country, it would cast serious doubts on its image and affect its functioning. Particularly, it would be highly unethical on part of the NSG, if India is admitted as a NSG member while Pakistan's request remains pending. More importantly, such move would disturb the regional balance-of-power.
- Pakistan undoubtedly possesses the essential credentials to be inducted as a NSG member. Not only does it have a clean record of flawlessly operating its nuclear plants for more than forty years, but also has the required expertise as well as broad export control regimes that are in accordance with the NSG guidelines.

### **Implications of India Becoming a Member of the NSG**

India is trying its best to become a member of the prestigious NSG, claiming fallaciously onto its immaculate nonproliferation record, capitalizing over emerging geo-strategic shift backed by a

resilient diplomatic maneuver projecting India as the most valued part of global geo-economic construct. In this quest of India, the US and its Western allies are vehemently backing India due to their geo-economic interests. Indian access to the NSG at prima facie might seem relatively low in terms of its implications, but carry massive consequences in per se. These implications have multitude of dimensions, including stability and security, nuclear proliferation, economic and political.

### ***Impact on Strategic Stability***

The strategic stability of South Asia is primarily dealt with in relation to India and Pakistan; anything that substantially increases India's power is incurring a security dilemma for Pakistan or vice versa. Though other states of the region cannot remain insulated from any major development, yet they do not contribute significantly to the region's stability matrix. Therefore, debate on impact on strategic stability is primarily focused upon India and Pakistan.

### ***Legitimacy to Indian Nuclear Program vis-a-vis Limitations for Pakistan***

Despite the Indo-US strategic deal, India and Pakistan share the identical status in global nuclear regime; being non-NPT signatory states. If India becomes a NSG member, it will be globally accepted as a nuclear state. This, in turn, will gradually lead India to seek legitimacy for its nuclear program, while concurrently posing challenges for Pakistan's nuclear program. Eventually, it most likely will lead to stringent measures against Pakistan through Indian contrived and Western lead policies. Prospects of inducing grave instability in this eventuality are quite evident.

### ***Fissile Material Ascendancy***

Preferential treatment will permit Indian to continue operating its 8 reactors outside the IAEA safeguards; thus, giving India ascendancy in stockpiling reactor grade plutonium. Daryl G. Kimball argued: "nuclear fuel sales to India for Indian power reactors may marginally help increase India's energy output, but at the same time it will free up India's limited domestic uranium supplies to be used exclusively for bomb-making (Jaspal, 2008, p. 28)." Resultantly, the regional balance-of-power will be disturbed, in favor of India; causing great political instability. Already due to the Indo-US deal the regional power equation was disturbed, which has given the Indian nuclear program great impetus.

### ***Complementing India's Design for Regional Dominance***

India becoming a part of the NSG would be catalytic in modernization of the Indian nuclear program. Combined with its rapidly modernizing conventional force, its transforming nuclear program will give it an edge within the region in general, vis-à-vis Pakistan in particular. Given the tacit approval of the US, India might undertake a provocation against Pakistan, especially vis-à-vis the protracted Kashmir dispute to force a favorable outcome.

### ***Deny Entry of Pakistan in the NSG***

As the NSG operates through consensus, should India gain entry into the global nuclear regime, it would deny Pakistan's entry. Not only will it isolate Pakistan from global commercial nuclear market, but also would utilize its energy to distance Pakistan from global nuclear arena. Denial of access to the global nuclear market will lead to technological gap; thus, pushing Pakistan's nuclear

program away from modernity. It will generate an asymmetry in weapons, which, in turn, may motivate an isolated state to embark upon some unaccepted shortcuts to meet the national security demands. This motivation under national security compulsion can lead to a catastrophic episode for Pakistan to become an object of proliferation leading to dire consequences at global level.

### ***India's Blatant Disregard to Nonproliferation Regime***

India's track record vis-à-vis nuclear non-proliferation regimes have been despicable. It has time and again violated international proliferation norms. If it becomes a member of the NSG, that too through preferential treatment, it will further embolden India vis-à-vis non-proliferation regime. No longer will it have any incentive or compulsion to sign any global protocols and treaties including NPT, CTBT and FMCT.

### **Implications for Pakistan**

Undoubtedly, Pakistan will be affected the most if the NSG admits India as a member. Though it is difficult to dissect the implications for Pakistan, such an event will cause multifaceted short to long term implications for socio-economic to geo-strategic and security imperatives for Pakistan. Significant repercussions in addition to the specifics of nuclear are explained below:

### ***Pakistan-China Relations***

India with support of likeminded countries in the NSG will embark upon an effort to force Pakistan to agree to full-scope IAEA safeguards as a requirement for its nuclear trade, particularly imports, else China would be approached to cut its nuclear trade with Pakistan, as per NSG protocol. As many Western experts believe that given NSG's current size, it will not be worth giving Pakistan a special waiver, as done in India's case, due to the fact that the cost – complexity of the matter and resources required to come to a consensus – easily greatly outweigh the benefits. On the other hand, undoubtedly, voluntary commitments are hard to execute but nothing is improbable in power politics; therefore, this issue has the potential to test the Pak-China relations.

### ***Energy Dilemma***

The NSG serves as a global cartel for nuclear trade, India being its member empowers to lobby like-minded states to create barriers for Pakistan to acquire much-needed nuclear fuel for its energy sector. It will thus have the ability to outwit Pakistan's nuclear energy goal of producing 40,000 MW by 2050. Denial of much needed cleaner and cheaper energy will push Pakistan towards adverse human security index; thus, leading to internal instability and chaos. Though, entry into the NSG directly appears to be a socio-economic imperative for Pakistan, but in the long run energy dilemma of Pakistan will transform into security threat for Pakistan.

### ***Reinforce The Anti-American Narrative***

The US vehemently advocating and paving the way for India's inclusion into the NSG will reinforce anti-American narrative in Pakistan. In Pakistan, a growing proportion of the population believes that time and again the US has used Pakistan and dumped it, especially whenever the latter needed something in return. Something yet again proved, when the US partnered with India, even though it assured not to give India space within the region when it asked Pakistan to join its War on Terrorism.

### **Implications for the Region**

As enunciated earlier, the NSG in isolation might be seen as merely India getting access to nuclear commercial regime, though without a doubt it will affect the geostrategic apparatus of the region.

#### ***Maximizing Indian Geostrategic Outlook***

India becoming a member of the NSG will bring it at par to the privileged nuclear states, which, in turn, will contribute to the Indian aspiration of becoming a global player. It will motivate India to assert its power within the peripheral region and bordering countries. Indian strategic thinking of a Greater India backed by its status will be a source of constant threat to the regional peace and stability.

#### ***Polarizing Indo-Sino Relations***

Rise in stature through the NSG membership will boost India's egotism, which, in turn, will help the US designs to pit India against China. It will transform the semblance of power construct in the region as well as at global level, locking India and China in a geopolitical confrontation, providing the US much-needed help in the region vis-à-vis China. It will cultivate India as major power broker in the region on behest of the US; thus, undermining the enduring balance-of-power in the region. Indo-US endeavors to impede China's vision will engrave cavernous lines between regional alliances.

#### ***Indian Leap Towards the UNSC***

India has been long aspiring to seek a permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). Though, it remains a dream, yet the membership of the NSG will undoubtedly help India further strengthen its credentials vis-a-vis its quest to get a UNSC seat. India becoming a NSG will enable it to project itself as a regional power; an equal to China.

### **Possible Scenarios**

After having elucidated a comprehensive picture of the India's quest for the NSG membership and its consequences, given below are plausible inter-related and intertwined scenarios in view of the emerging scenarios.

#### ➤ **Scenario A – Status Quo, Pakistan and India are Denied Membership of the NSG**

The scenario envisions that status quo will prevail, as India will be denied the membership of the NSG. The triggers behind this scenario may be; lack of consensus due to heightened diplomatic maneuvering by Pakistan, continued insistence by China on criteria based admission, and Turkey's stand for simultaneous entry of both India and Pakistan.

#### ➤ **Scenario B – Simultaneous NSG Membership of Pakistan and India**

The scenario is based on the hypothesis of successful efforts by Pakistan as outlined under Scenario A, with unwavering support by China and Turkey to accept both India and Pakistan simultaneously on the basis of criteria-based approach.

#### ➤ **Scenario C - Preferential Membership to India; Pakistan's Case Overlooked**

This Scenario envisions granting India the NSG membership through preferential treatment, as pursued by the US. The scenario is based on compromise by the currently resisting member

countries due to active diplomacy by India, and the US using its geopolitical and geoeconomic influence. However, the scenario has its strands tied to the current developments in and around the region, with special reference to US endeavors to contain China.

### ➤ **Scenario D - Pakistan's Admission into the NSG; India's Application Overlooked**

This scenario conceives granting Pakistan the NSG membership while Indian application is pending. The situation is based on the belief that Pakistan is given membership consequent to following of criteria-based approach, wherein Pakistan's credentials and its potential for positive contribution in furthering good non-proliferation is recognized. Persistent Chinese support would be key in realization of the scenario.

There exists a direct linkage between these scenarios. An incisive analysis reveals that Scenario A (status quo) seems to be high in terms of probability, whereas Scenario B is most desired, but it has to find its way through Scenario A. While scenario A is most likely for some time to come, scenario B is most desired for Pakistan. Scenario C is least desired but not beyond the realm of materialization. However, it has to pass through the scrutiny of not only the NSG but geo-politico-economic developments across the region in context of the US and China. It would be, therefore, prudent to state that Scenario A and B are intertwined.

Given this inter-relationship it was hard to dissect the available options and recommendations for each scenario. Therefore, given below are policy prescriptions to reach Scenario B, while mitigating the repercussion arising in case of exceptional entry of India into NSG.

### **Policy Prescriptions**

Options envisaged have been crafted to arrive at the much-desired Scenario B, while taking into cognizance the importance to maintain strategic stability.

#### **1. Diplomatic - International/Regional Audience**

- a) A multi vectored diplomatic drive targeting NSG members and regional stake holders to project a narrative crafted on the basis of these thrust lines:
  - i. Validity of Pakistan's nuclear credentials
  - ii. Negative implications on strategic stability of South Asia and implications for non-proliferation regime in case India becomes a NSG member, by a special waiver/exception.
  - iii. Possibilities of comparative peace and transparency within region due to Indo-Pak entry into the group on the basis of evenhanded criterion simultaneously.
- b) Continue to foster our strategic partnership with China, and project Pakistan's position in Chinese geo-politico-economic vision.
- c) Strengthen Pakistan's lobbying within the US, the EU and other NSG member countries to gain support for Pakistan's membership for the NSG.

#### **2. Specific to International Nuclear Organization**

- a) Consultation with friendly and like-minded NSG member countries, emphasizing the need to craft just and concrete criteria for dealing with new applicants of NSG membership.
- b) Highlight quality of Pakistan's export controls which are fully harmonized with those of the NSG, MTCR and Australia Group.
- c) Project Pakistan's future energy needs and its potential for nuclear trade.

#### **3. Academia and Think Tank**

- a) Activate own academia and think tank to expose long term diverse implications of Indian access as an exception vs potential benefit of concurrent entry of both states.

#### **4. Domestic**

- a) Project, maintain and strengthen nuclear strategy of full spectrum deterrence, while focusing on mitigating conventional asymmetry.
- b) Accelerate indigenous capacity building for civil nuclear technology.
- c) Reenergize efforts to stabilize the internal front and capitalize over socio-economic gains of CPEC, thereby improving own security outlook.

### **CONCLUSION**

In a nutshell, despite the fact that throughout the course of time, India has blatantly and repeatedly violated nuclear non-proliferation safeguards; starting from the US Atoms for Peace initiative to conducting nuclear tests, with time a strong case has been built by India, with the support of the US, to somehow gain full membership of the prestigious NSG. In 2008, only a decade after India conducted its nuclear test by detonating nuclear bombs while violating all non-proliferation regimes, by tactful advocacy of the US, India was granted a special waiver by the NSG, which enabled its access to civil nuclear technology. On the contrary, neither did Pakistan violate the terms and conditions of the Atoms for Peace initiative, nor it had planned to detonate atomic bombs to announce itself as a nuclear capable state – India’s action forced its hand – still each time the US imposed similar if not harsher sanctions on Pakistan as it did on India.

Moreover, soon after India became a nuclear power, it openly professed that it aims to attain a dominating role in regional and global politics. To India’s luck its interests perfectly aligned with the US’, which wanted to contain the threat posed by the meteoric rise of China, thus, needed a partner in the region having the potential to stand up to China. Resultantly, in no time, the two states became strategic partners and historic levels of socio-economic, military and political collaboration has been witnessed ever since. Where the Indo-US nexus up to a great extent enabled each side to secure their individual agendas, it had far reaching implications on regional politics, particularly for Pakistan.

Surprisingly, neither India nor the US feel satisfied with just a waiver by the NSG. Thus, India continues to campaign to become a full NSG member whereas the US vehemently continues to plead its case. Should India get the NSG membership as an exception, it will not only unleash host of complications for the region, but also create a strategic and security dilemma for Pakistan. It is heartening to note that Pakistan government is alive to the sensitivities for India’s unilateral membership and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is spearheading a comprehensive approach to bulwark the Indo-US attempts. However, consistent and focused efforts are needed to sensitize the world that any uneven decisions made by Regional or Global forums, on the basis of preference, are likely to further vitiate the already volatile situation of the region. While importance of the region has increased manifold with the projections of next century belonging to Asia, as major international players need to consider regional sensitivities in pursuing their interests. South Asia needs a peaceful era ahead, which would benefit not only population of both the countries but the region as a whole.



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