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**Nuclear Power For Sustainable Development,  
International Peace And Cooperation In South Asia**

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Nuclear energy is an important branch of both world's politics and economy of XXI century. Around 11% of the world energy generation is provided by about 450 nuclear power reactors. It has particular importance for the sustainable development of populated developing countries especially when they experience the hydrocarbons deficit. Many of them consider nuclear energy as an essential branch for fulfilling the UN Sustainable development goals 2016-2030.

South Asia is one of the regions where development of nuclear power as well as renewables could be a way of eliminating the power supply shortage and tackling the environmental issues. However, India and Pakistan haven't signed non-proliferation treaty

(NPT), while NPT non-signers are subjects to nuclear export regulation. In 2008, the USA managed to lobby through Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) a unique waiver for India exempting the country from the NSG guidelines for civilian nuclear exports. The waiver meant India got right to import nuclear fuel and technology for civilian nuclear sector. This precedent on the one hand had a positive impact on the sustainable development of India, one of the most populated industrial countries, and broadens the world economic cooperation in energy, on the other hand, the fact of the waiver itself was a contradiction to the basic principles of non-proliferation and had a potential to upset the equilibrium of power in South Asia. India has got a huge advantage by becoming de facto (not de jure) the sixth acknowledged nuclear weapons state while Pakistan's interests were left out of the consideration. Granting any exemptions of NSG rules to a country may have many virtues but it still a negative trend for non-proliferation. Moreover, granting them to India alone leaving Pakistan's concerns outside harms NPT even worse considering existing issues within the region.

Earlier this year India became the 43<sup>rd</sup> member of Australia Group. This membership was as well as attaining membership to two other "sensitive" technology arrangements such as Wassenaar Arrangement in December 2017 and Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) in May 2016 particularly meant to pave a way to Indian NSG membership. It pushed hard to become another NSG member in 2016 and 2017 but the initiative was blocked every time, the biggest opponent was China, mostly, for political reasons. Indian membership should not be rushed but country's potential to export nuclear related technology in other countries makes it essential for India to become a part of global nuclear export control. However, NSG makes decisions by consensus, thus, New-Delhi will have opportunity to block any further decisions to lift restrictions for Islamabad.

This is why Pakistan sought aid from China, a nuclear supplier, for the rapid development of the civil nuclear program and has managed to greatly increase the nuclear power capacity since then from 420 MW (2 power reactors) in 2008 to 1440 MW (5 power reactors) today plus 2 reactors each having gross electrical capacity of 1100 MW being under construction. The compliance of Pak-China cooperation to the NSG rules is very questionable but Pakistan willingly authorized IAEA to establish the safeguards on all its currently functional and future civil nuclear facilities, thus, demonstrating openness and ensuring that the new and current NPPs won't be used for non-peaceful purposes. On March 14, 2017, Yukiya Amano, the director general of the IAEA, visited plants in Karachi.

He said that was “very impressed to see that Pakistan has taken all possible nuclear safety and security measures... This can only have a positive effect on Pakistan’s international image”<sup>1</sup>.

It is impossible to turn around the trend triggered by the NSG exemptions implying new restrictions or sanctions. The whole situation shall be dealt through negotiations and consensus between India and Pakistan in order to keep balance between interests of the countries. So, criteria-based approach to granting at least another exemption of NSG rules for Islamabad seems to be the only viable option to resolve the current issue. Pavel Didkovsky, the first secretary of the Russian Embassy in Islamabad, said that Moscow had neither intention nor wish to oppose the Pakistan’s ambition to become another member of NSG and hails Pakistani adherence to international conventions on its exports as well as unilateral nuclear test moratorium<sup>2</sup>. The countries will likely to follow the principles of non-proliferation more responsibly if the progress in gaining exemptions already achieved by one of them can be rolled back when nuclear technology is used for the wrong cause. This is why Pakistan shall be granted the NSG waiver as well as India should become a part of NSG on certain terms. Such as bilateral adherence to line of disarmament. Upon becoming a member of NSG India as well as any other NPT non-signer should not have a right of vote on issues that concern other NPT non-signers in order to exclude the possibility of blocking Pakistan’s ambition to become a member of NSG later. Other measures should also be regarded to ensure that nuclear power in South Asia is focused on sustainable development.

Regardless of the criticism, the “peaceful atom” has many virtues as an energy branch such as environmental friendliness, relative cost-efficiency (under certain conditions) and security. The interest for nuclear energy among the South Asian countries has risen significantly for the last decade. Apart from Pakistan and India, Bangladesh is becoming a country that will use a nuclear power, Sri Lanka considers to build a NPP in coming decades. Exemptions given by NSG made a huge contribution to developing of “peaceful atom” of South Asia, so taking in mind the current situation NSG as well as IAEA and other regulating arrangements instead of restrictions should focus on cautious and

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<sup>1</sup> IAEA DG satisfied with Pak nuclear safety standards // The Nation, 15.03.2018  
<https://nation.com.pk/15-Mar-2018/iaea-dg-satisfied-with-pak-nuclear-safety-standards?show=preview&w=18388168508466929728?version=amp>

<sup>2</sup> Russia signals support for Pakistan’s NSG candidature // Arab News, 18.12.2017  
<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1210756/world>

unhasting promotion of the nuclear power in South Asia for peaceful purposes. This can be achieved only with regard to balance between the interests of every South Asian country.

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