Pakistan and the Nuclear Suppliers Group

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Concerns over nuclear energy have substantially increased in recent years particularly in developing countries striving to maintain sustainable socioeconomic development, and to reduce carbon emission for environmental protection. 'Asia remains a highly energy-intense region due to high energy consumption levels.'[i] World energy consumption is expected to grow by 41 [per cent] between 2012 and 2035, with around 95 per cent of that coming from emerging economies, in particular China and India. China is producing 19,050MWe and aspires to produce 50,000 MWe by 2020 and 400,000MW by 2050. India plans to boost its nuclear capacity up to 15 fold by 2032. There are reportedly 14 states that are planning to build nuclear power programmes.[ii]

Nuclear power offers Pakistan an inexpensive environmentally safe source of energy. Continued reliance on fossil fuels would generate irreversible challenges such as global warming, air, water and land pollution, and thermal pollution and would also have a direct bearing on Pakistan's national security. Many of the environmental problems Pakistan faces today are the outcome of fossil fuel dependence. Meanwhile, as the entire world is moving away from fossil fuels to cleaner energy Pakistan would be going backwards. Pakistan urgently requires energy to provide electric power to households, support national infrastructure and industry to put the country on the path of progress. Nuclear energy is part of the solution.

Pakistan has three operating nuclear power reactors – Karachi Nuclear Power Plant (K -1), Chashma-1 (C-1) and Chashma-2 (C-2). Chashma 3 was recently inaugurated whereas Chashma 4 is expected to be completed in 2017, each with the capacity of 340 MWe. Contextually recognizing the need for more energy, Pakistan initiated two 1100 MWe class reactors – K-2 and K-3 that would be finalized by 2020 and 2021, respectively. The K-2 and K-3 are an undeniable need for Pakistan as in recent times the production of electricity is far less than the demand, coupled with announced and unannounced load-shedding that impedes growth and development. Indeed the fastest and cheapest way of dealing with the country's power crisis is building K-2 and K-3 nuclear power plants.[iii]

Pakistan cannot meet its energy requirements until it receives a Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) waiver like India obtained in 2008. The NSG was created against the background of the Indian nuclear explosions in 1974 to regulate the transfer of nuclear technologies. However, India was offered the NSG waiver thereby obtaining the same benefits as the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT) states in the form of the Indo-US nuclear deal in 2008. India is now bidding for the NSG membership which requires a state to sign the NPT before formally entering this exclusive club. India formally submitted its membership application on 12 May 2016 followed by Pakistan on 19 May in the same year.

The NSG annual plenary session that was held in Seoul in June that year did not reach any consensus on the inclusion of India and Pakistan in the NSG. Several key NSG states such as Australia, Ireland, New Zealand and Switzerland maintained principled opposition thereby questioning these states' non-NPT status. Other states like Brazil and Turkey called for a criteria-based process to be put in place. Six years ago, U.S. President Barack Obama pledged his support for India's entry, consequently, the US supported India's single admittance in the club.[iv] China, however, has strongly resisted the Indian application, arguing that it would enhance nuclear competition in South Asia by isolating Pakistan. Later in November that year, China proposed that the solution to new aspirants' accession to the NSG should be non-discriminatory, applicable to all non-NPT members and must not damage the strength and spirit of the NSG and the NPT. The NSG joint statement highlighted Technical, Legal and Political Aspects of the

Participants of non-NPT States in the NSG thereby deciding to continue discussions.[v]

Thus, Rafael Mariano Grossi, former chairman of the NSG was assigned the task to prepare a formula on inclusion of non-NPT states in the cartel. The Grossi's six-point formula[vi] seems to put India in an advantageous position over Pakistan questioning the latter's credentials. If cumulatively analyzed, Pakistan already adheres to all the Grossi's six-point formula except the signing of the IAEA's additional protocol (AP) that Pakistan can consider signing any time with the IAEA.

Pakistan is protesting[vii] the India-specific membership in the NSG. As the Indian Separation plan on civil-nuclear facilities is not fully implemented, eight of its civilian power reactors, Fast Breeders Reactors, fuel cycle and other facilities reside outside the IAEA's safeguards. India's AP agreement with the IAEA applies only to its nuclear exports. It does not apply to Indian nuclear material, facilities or associated equipment. India has outright refused to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and remained muted on Pakistan's proposal to sign the bilateral moratorium on non-testing. India has not ceased the production of fissile material for military purposes. Indian export control guidelines do not specifically outlaw transfer of ENR technologies. India does not have an independent nuclear regulatory authority which could oversee nuclear material security and safety aspects.

India is keen to join the cartel to achieve global support for its civil nuclear deals. It aims at achieving a recognized nuclear state status. India also wants to ease the pathway to secure a permanent seat in the UNSC. This is why, India is busy implementing a sustained military build-up involving the use of modern state of the art weapons systems, ballistic missiles, nuclear powered submarines capable of launching ICBMs, large aircraft carriers capable of operating fixed-wing combat aircrafts, substantial surface warfare and submarine fleet and sophisticated air platforms.

Considering its domestic power starvation and deficiency that plagues its development and endangers human security, Pakistan needs to secure membership in the NSG, but guided by a new formula that defines nuclear cooperation based on new realities of the 21st century. Pakistan has to plan to build more nuclear power plants to add electricity to its national grid to ensure energy security and accelerate the pace of economic development. It is confident that it can accomplish this task by further promoting nuclear security norms and implementing its national energy plans, under the IAEA's safeguards.

Hence, the international arrangements that promote and facilitate the peaceful uses of nuclear technology demand revisions in the light of increased demand for nuclear energy security. The NPT or NSG will not become resilient and effective while promoting a selective approach to regulate global nuclear commerce. The NSG must create balance between non-proliferation and peaceful uses of technology and open gateway for new contenders. It is high time that the group members readjust the NSG guidelines by setting up a new formula on the principle of energy security for all. This will make the NSG more relevant and the NPT more resilient in the 21st century. It will help enforce CTBT and address the impasse in the CD on FMCT. Through the NSG, the group members can help integrate and recognize the status of India and Pakistan, allowing them to retain their nuclear deterrence to maintain peace and abstain from a dangerous nuclear arms race. Through revised – universally acceptable guidelines, the NSG can be made a permanent group that may indirectly universalize the status of the NPT.

[i] Rajesh Basrur and KohSwee Lean Collin and Kalyan M. Kemburi, 'Nuclear energy and energy security in Asia', in Rajesh Basrur and KohSwee Lean Collin (eds.), *Nuclear Power and Energy Security in Asia* (New York: Routledge 2012), p. 2

[ii] Ramesh Thakur and Gareth Evans, eds., *Nuclear Weapons: The State of Play*, p. 200.

[iii]Authors' interaction with the relevant strategic community in Islamabad in Oct-November 2015.

[iv] US to support India's full membership in NSG', Times of India, November 6, 2010.

[v] Public Statement: Plenary Meeting of the Nuclear Suppliers Group, Seoul, Republic of Korea, 23-24 June, 2016.

Available at http://www.nsg-online.org/images/2016_Public_Statement_Final.pdf

[vi] Daryl G. Kimball , 'NSG Membership Proposal Would Undermine Nonproliferation,' *Arms Control* Today, 21 December2016:https://www.armscontrol.org/blog/ArmsControlNow/2016-12-21/NSG-Membership-Proposal-Would-Undermine-Nonproliferation

[vii] http://www.dawn.com/news/1304941, http://www.dawn.com/news/1304890

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Rizwana Abbasi received her PhD from University of Leicester, UK specializing in International Security and Nuclear Non-proliferation. Presently she is a fellow of East West Institute, USA and Associate Professor in the Department of International relations at National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad. Previously Rizwana was associate professor in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at Bahria University, Islamabad. Formerly she was placed as associate professors in the Department of International Relations at National Defense University, Islamabad. She was a Stimson Centre visiting fellow earlier. Rizwana was a post-doctoral research fellow and has been teaching at the University of Leicester. She was also a research fellow at the University of Leeds. She is a graduate of the Daniel K. Inouye Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies (DKI APCSS), Hawaii, and USA. Her latest book is Nuclear Deterrence in South Asia: New Technologies and Challenges to Sustainable Peace (Oxford: Rutledge, 2019). She has also authored: Pakistan and the New Nuclear Taboo: Regional Deterrence and the International Arms Control Regime (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2012).