

افغانستان آزاد – آزاد افغانستان

AA-AA

چو کشور نپاشد تن من مباد بدین بوم ویر زنده یک تن مباد
همه سر به سر تن به کشتن دهیم از آن به که کشور به دشمن دهیم

www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

European Languages

زبان های اروپایی

<http://thediomat.com/2015/11/the-road-to-a-us-pakistan-nuclear-deal-begins-in-islamabad/>

The Road to a US-Pakistan Nuclear Deal Begins in Islamabad

Pakistan needs to move towards international norms, not away from them.

By Saira Bano
November 06, 2015

Before the official visit of Pakistan's Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif, to the U.S. on October 22, the media in Pakistan and India were buzzing with reports that the United States was exploring a nuclear deal with Pakistan in order to constrain its nuclear weapons program, believed to be the most rapidly expanding on earth. Pakistan, on the other hand, has ruled out any possibility of a deal that places conditions on its nuclear weapons program. Pakistan is looking for a deal similar to the one India got, in which New Delhi was given access to the international market for its civilian nuclear program without putting significant constraints on its nuclear weapons program.

Given its poor nonproliferation track record, weak democracy, fragile economy, and support for terrorist organizations as a strategic tool, Pakistan will be unable to end its nuclear isolation without committing to strong nuclear nonproliferation conditions.

The India-US Nuclear Deal

The United States signed a nuclear deal with India in 2005, which successfully ended three decades of international sanctions against New Delhi and made India the only non-NPT country that is allowed to have nuclear trade with the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) along with its

nuclear weapons program. The Bush administration saw India as a counterweight against a rising China and wanted to boost New Delhi's economic and military capabilities in order to counterbalance Beijing. The administration was determined to improve relations with India, and to accomplish that it was willing to change the rules and norms of the nuclear nonproliferation that Washington worked for decades to establish.

A key architect of Bush's India policy and U.S. ambassador to India, Robert Blackwill, noted, "President George W. Bush based his transformation of U.S.-India relations on the core strategic principle of democratic India as a key factor balancing the rise of Chinese power." Blackwill added that without this China factor at the fore "the Bush administration would not have negotiated the civil nuclear agreement and the Congress would not have approved it." Both countries have a shared interest in China's rise in Asia. Pakistan is also strategically important for the U.S., as its support is key to stability in Afghanistan. However, unlike India, Pakistan does not share common strategic interests with Washington; rather, both sides often have contradictory policy objectives vis-à-vis Kabul.

It is important to note that, despite India's arguably good nonproliferation record, stable democracy, and fast growing economy, it was not easy for the United States to conclude the deal. At the domestic level, the deal faced resistance in the U.S. The U.S. Congress, under pressure from the Bush administration, approved the deal, but placed several conditions on it, including India's support in opposing Iran's nuclear program, termination of the agreement if India resumed nuclear tests, and a pledge that the deal would not be offered to the other two non-NPT states – Pakistan and Israel – in order to limit the repercussions for the nuclear nonproliferation regime. Aside from the anticipated strategic benefits, the U.S. Congress was also persuaded by the argument that opening India's nuclear market would create job opportunities for Americans in providing nuclear goods and services.

At the international level, it was an uphill task for the Bush administration to get a consensus decision in the NSG for an Indian exemption from NSG guidelines. The United States had to change the waiver draft three times in order to meet the concerns of the NSG member states. Despite the fact that most of the major supplier countries, among them the U.K., Russia, France, Germany, Canada and Australia, were in favor of the waiver, it was not easy to overcome the resistance of the other member countries, such as Austria, New Zealand, Ireland, Sweden, Norway, the Netherlands, and Sweden, all staunch proponents of the nuclear nonproliferation regime. Finally, the United States had to warn those countries that blocking the waiver would have consequences for their bilateral relations with Washington. In the case of Pakistan, it would be a hard pill to swallow at the NSG and it is difficult to imagine any lifting of international nuclear sanctions without Islamabad taking on strong nonproliferation commitments and demonstrating responsible nuclear behavior.

Pakistan's Demand for a Similar Deal

Since 2005, Pakistan has been demanding a similar agreement to the one India got. The United States, however, has been terming the Indian agreement an exceptional case, and Pakistan has received only a non-committal response. Frustrated by this U.S. reluctance, Pakistan signed a nuclear deal with China in which Beijing agreed to sell two nuclear reactors to Islamabad. Others

argue that this is violation of NSG guidelines, but China claims that it is grandfathered under an earlier agreement with Pakistan. Pakistan has also repeatedly blocked consensus in the Conference on Disarmament (CD) to start negotiations on the Fissile Material Control Treaty (FMCT), despite pressure from the major powers. Internally, Pakistan began accelerating production of fissile material; Islamabad believes that the India-U.S. nuclear deal will allow India ramp up its nuclear program by conserving its domestic fissile material exclusively for that use.

Pakistan's enhanced production of weapons grade fissile material has aggravated concerns in Washington about the safety and security of Pakistan's nuclear weapons program, given the possibility that nuclear material may fall into the hands of terrorist organizations operating in Pakistan. These concerns are further heightened by the possibility that Islamabad is on the verge of deploying tactical or low-yield nuclear weapons – weapons that Pakistan is developing in order to thwart Indian conventional military adventure under its Cold Start strategy. The deployment of tactical nuclear weapons makes it far harder to protect them from terrorists or prevent accidental use.

Tactical Nuclear Weapons

India adopted its Cold Start doctrine in 2004. It aims to give India the ability to “shift from defensive to offensive operations” in order to punish terrorists elements in Pakistan. Such a strike is meant to be so swift and decisive that it would “pre-empt a nuclear retaliation.” This provocative strategy has many drawbacks: at present India lacks critical assets such as artillery, armor and helicopters; close coordination among ground, air and maritime forces is problematic due to organizational structures; close geography makes limited war challenging; supply lines are hard to maintain after territorial gains; and finally it would pressure Pakistan into escalating the conflict.

While Pakistan developed tactical nuclear weapons to counter India's Cold Start strategy, empirical evidence since 2004 suggests that India has not implemented this doctrine. It remains “more of a concept than a reality.” Indian officials and policymakers have either denied its existence or have not endorsed this adventurous strategy. A classified document released by WikiLeaks, dated February 16, 2010, revealed that Tim Roemer, then U.S. Ambassador to India, described Cold Start as “a mixture of myth and reality.” He further argued, “While the army may remain committed to the goals of the doctrine, political support is less clear.”

India, on the other hand, has threatened to use its strategic weapons in response to Pakistan's use of short-range nuclear weapons. In this way, regardless of the size, delivery system or yield, the use of tactical nuclear weapons always carries the danger of “strategic implications.” Islamabad seems to believe that the use of tactical nuclear weapons has no strategic implications and that a limited nuclear strike within Pakistani territory to impede advancing Indian forces will not escalate into a full-fledged nuclear war.

During the Cold War the United States deployed tactical nuclear weapons in Western Europe to deter conventional aggression by the numerically superior Soviet forces. But what deterred the Soviet Union from attacking NATO countries was not the possession of tactical nuclear

weapons. Instead, it was the risk of escalation to the strategic level once tactical weapons had been used. Hans Morgenthau, a leading American classical realist, widely criticized the employment of U.S. tactical nuclear weapons. He was against the idea of a winnable limited nuclear war. In his article “Has atomic war really become impossible?” in 1956, published in Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, he argued that the “right atomic dosage” depends on a “blend of self-restraint and daring, which few leaders have proven themselves to be capable of for any length of time.” He further argued, “If one side were to push the other into defeat, in reliance upon the latter’s resolution not to start an all-out atomic war, it might provoke that very war.”

The deployment of tactical nuclear weapons also raises concerns in the international community about the safety of these weapons in light of the terrorist organizations operating in Pakistan. Political instability and terrorist attacks – with inside support – on military installations, including army headquarters in Rawalpindi, a naval base in Karachi, an air base in Kamra, and Peshawar, have exacerbated these concerns. It is in Pakistan’s interests, therefore, to rely on its strategic nuclear weapons to deter an Indian threat.

The Economic Factor

Economic motivations were also significant in offering India the nuclear deal. Recognizing India’s emerging economy, Russia, France, Germany, Britain, and Italy were keen to lift sanctions against India to access New Delhi’s lucrative nuclear market. These countries proposed the idea to the United States in the 1990s, but the Clinton administration didn’t want to compromise its nonproliferation agenda and rejected the idea. The neo-conservative Bush Administration was more open to action. The major supplier countries supported the Indian waiver at the NSG along with the U.S. and India. Even countries like Canada and Australia, with strong nonproliferation policies, supported the waiver, keen to get their share of the Indian nuclear market. There are no such economic incentives in the case of Pakistan, which continues to rely heavily on “commercial loans, concessionary donor loans and aid.” Islamabad’s poor economic performance, widespread corruption, and weak political institutions hardly make it a promising market for nuclear commerce.

Steps to Be Taken

The chances of Pakistan securing a nuclear deal with the United States in the foreseeable future seem remote. Islamabad has a long way to go to improve its image in the international community, to end its nuclear isolation, and to normalize its nuclear status. An over-reliance on nuclear weapons is counterproductive for Islamabad. Repeatedly blocking consensus to start negotiations on the FMCT, developing and deploying tactical nuclear weapons, and increasing production of weapons-grade fissile material are not steps that serve its interests. Instead, they add to its image as an irresponsible nuclear state. With the AQ Khan baggage, poor economic conditions, a fragile democracy, and allegations of links with terrorist organizations, Pakistan needs to take steps that are complementary to international norms, not contradictory to them.