

Bush Initiative and India

The US is likely to use the proliferation issue to restrict technology to India



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The covert horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons material and technology by Pakistani scientists has been a matter of concern and debate in the international community, both at the government and non-governmental levels. Details of these clandestine activities orchestrated by Dr Abdul Qadeer Khan are coming incrementally to public knowledge. Certain characteristics of this dangerous development need to be discerned and defined.

First and foremost, a number of countries in the world made the acquisition of nuclear weapons an integral part of their strategic and defence planning. Second, Pakistan, China and North Korea for political, strategic and economic motives functioned as catalysts for systematic horizontal proliferation of technology and material related to weapons of mass destruction. Third, Dr Khan functioned as the key macro-level manager of this negative activity. Fourth, whatever the obfuscations, successive governments of Pakistan since Zia-ul-Haq's time were either active participants in these horizontal proliferation activities, or connived in these activities. Fifth, the campaign against the Russian invasion of Afghanistan and Saddam Hussein in Iraq resulted in the US tolerating Pakistan's nuclear weaponisation and its acquisition of nuclear and missile technologies and nuclear material. Sixth, companies in Europe, North America, Canada and South East Asia contributed to Pakistan's illegal trade of nuclear technology and nuclear material. It is inconceivable that the highly competent intelligence agencies of the western democracies did not have an inkling of this ongoing skulduggery. Seventh, the irrelevance of the Non Proliferation Treaty in terms of its stipulations and its capacity to enforce the stipulations stands affirmed, given the fact that North Korea, Iran and Libya are signatories of the NPT. They still carried on the acquisition of WMD material illegally. Eighth, this successful illegal transaction of horizontal proliferation by Pakistan and other countries brings out either the inefficiency or negative political influences effecting safeguards and inspection procedures of the International Atomic Energy Agency. The Agency, which has been perfecting its safeguards arrangements since the late 1960s, still needs to draft and implement additional protocol to safeguard nuclear

facilities and emphasise its shortcomings.

India's reaction to this critical development has been very measured and restrained. India has declared that this has been a very dangerous and pernicious development. It has also clarified that it does not consider this phenomenon of horizontal proliferation a bilateral India-Pakistan issue. India correctly assesses that it is an issue effecting regional security and that it has international implications in terms of nuclear security and safeguards.

It is clear that the major nuclear powers of the world under the leadership of the United States would not only be taking remedial action against the phenomenon of horizontal proliferation engineered by Pakistan, but they would be putting in place measures and regimes to prevent such proliferation in future. Some of these measures are bound to affect India's nuclear weapons status in terms of future developments. Some indication of what these measures and remedial safeguards would be was given by President Bush in a speech which he gave to the National Defence University in Washington on February 11. The first portion of his speech was a detailed description of the activities of Dr Abdul Qadeer Khan and his associates. In the second portion, the US President outlined seven corrective proposals. First, he suggested that proliferation security initiatives which he announced a few months ago should be expanded to cover covert transactions including shipments and transfers of nuclear material and technologies. He suggested that expanded proliferation security initiative should be implemented with structured and greater cooperation between the intelligence agencies, military services and law enforcement agencies, including the Interpol, to cover illegal non-governmental proliferators.

Secondly, he suggested strengthening of the international legal system and international controls governing proliferation. He recommended a UN Security Council Resolution which would stipulate that all member states of the United Nations should have foolproof security for all sensitive materials and technologies within their respective borders.

Thirdly, he proposed international arrangements to safeguards weapons and technologies left over from the Cold War from falling into the hands of non-government actors or into the hands of gov-

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ernments which are not entitled to such materials within the frame-work of NPT and related arrangements.

Fourthly, he indicated that the US would increase its allocation of USD20 billion over 10 years to support programmes which would focus on giving safe employment to scientists and technologies specialised in weapons of mass destruction in Eastern Europe and countries like Iraq and Libya. The US would assist countries to end the use of weapons grade Uranium in their research reactors. The fund would also be used to assist countries to secure and eliminate not only nuclear, but chemical and biological weapons.

Fifthly, President Bush indicated that the US policy would be to structure meaningful international cooperation to implement the provisions of the NPT. He desired this cooperation to focus on nuclear weapons states adopting operational policies to help non-nuclear states to develop peaceful uses for atomic energy. He said they categorically renounce pursuit of nuclear weapons. For this purpose the international community should create a fully safeguarded supply system for the installation and operation of nuclear plant for peaceful purposes. World's leading nuclear experts with such states have dependable access to nuclear fuel for civil purposes at reasonable cost, subject to the condition that they must not undertake any enrichment and reprocessing of Uranium.

He suggested that the 40-member Nuclear Suppliers Group should refuse to sell enrichment and reprocessing equipment and technology to any state that does not already possess full-scale functioning equipment and reprocessing plants. (Since India already possesses such equipment and has independent technological capacities in these regards, this suggestion may not pose any threat to Indian interests. Nevertheless, the suppliers' group would continue to be restrictive about nuclear supplies to India.)

An important suggestion that Bush made within the framework of this 4th suggestion is that International Atomic Energy Agency should be equipped to give mandate to cover banned nuclear activities around the world and report these violations to the United Nations' Security Council. This will impose the UN Security Council's political and security jurisdiction on violators of non-proliferation stipulations.

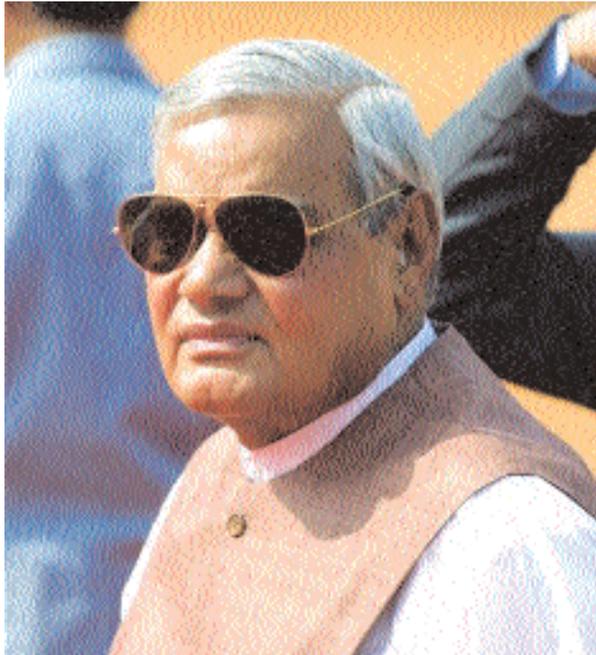
Bush also suggested that an additional protocol should be provided and implemented by IAEA requiring all states to declare details of their nuclear activities and facilities and the IAEA to inspect these facilities and apply full-scope safeguards. Bush's fifth recommendation is that only such countries which sign this protocol should be allowed to import equipment for their nuclear programmes.

The sixth remedial measure is the recommendation to create a special committee of the Board of Governors of the IAEA with focussed responsibilities to implement safeguards and verification procedures. This committee should be made up of governments in good standing with IAEA. The seventh recommendation is that countries which have been in violation of the nuclear pro-

liferation obligations, accepted by the international community, should not be allowed to become Member of the Board of Governors of the IAEA.

While assessing the possible impact of these measures which are quite likely to become part of the international law and international regimes on nuclear issues, one must note the fact that India does not fall under the category of signatories of the NPT, nor has it acquired its nuclear and missile capacities clandestinely. India is also unique in that its nuclear and missile capacities are essentially indigenous. An additional fact is that India has an impeccable record of preventing horizontal proliferation to other countries.

Despite these facts, impending prospects are that India will remain under pressure on its nuclear weapons status. As far as the US and its nuclear weapons allies remain categorical in their commitment to the provisions of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and its derivative international regimes, the fundamental objective of the US would be to persuade India to cap its nuclear and missile weapons capacities and then to roll back and eliminate these capacities. As India has not violated any international treaty or agreement, this objective would be pursued through a process of insistent negotiations. India would certainly be pressurised to sign



the proposed additional protocol which would involve India to make public practically all its nuclear activities and facilities and to allow international inspections. This is the fourth proposal of Bush. The fifth proposal would equally impact on India as it suggests that only countries which sign this additional protocol would be allowed to import nuclear equipment, technology and material. So it would not be enough if India wishes to import nuclear material and equipment for peaceful purposes under international safeguards with the IAEA. It would become mandatory for India to abide by the provisions of the additional protocol with intrusive and expanded jurisdiction. It is obvious that India cannot blindly accept this additional protocol and make public those nuclear and technological facilities

which are involved in India's nuclear weapons and missile programmes. Even countries like the Russian Federation which have been providing equipment and material for India's peaceful nuclear facilities for generation of power would be under pressure to pull back from this cooperation.

The prospects for India are to move towards complete self-reliance regarding its nuclear and missile technology instead of depending on external inputs. The management of India's nuclear weapons and missile status is going to be a major challenge to India's foreign and national security policies. Two requirements are: to continue a constructive process of negotiations with the US and other nuclear weapons powers and safeguard India's interests in these regards. Secondly, improve and tighten our technology management and export control laws to fall in line with the requirement of preventing horizontal proliferation of such capacities to others. ●

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