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## NPT Must for India's Entry into NSG : China

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Recently the permanent members of the **United Nations Security Council (UNSC)** also known as **P5 countries (China, France, Russia, Britain and the US)** - have concluded their meetings to **discuss issues related to nuclear disarmament**, nuclear non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

- **China** has said that **India** must sign the **Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)** to gain entry into **Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG)**.
- Earlier, after India applied for the NSG membership, **Pakistan** too applied for the same following which China, a close ally of Pakistan, called for a **two-step approach** which states that **NSG members** first need to **arrive at a set of principles for the admission of non-NPT states** into the group and then **move forward discussions of specific cases**.

## Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG)

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- NSG is a **group of nuclear supplier countries that seeks to contribute to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons** through the implementation of **guidelines for nuclear exports and nuclear-related exports**.
- The NSG was **set up as a response to India's nuclear tests conducted in 1974**.
- The aim of the NSG is to ensure that **nuclear trade for peaceful purposes** does not contribute to the proliferation of nuclear weapons.
- The grouping has **48 participating governments** and the European Commission acts as an Observer.
- Since **2008**, India has sought membership in the NSG. The same year, the **NSG granted India a "clean waiver" from its existing rules**, which forbids nuclear trade with a country which has not signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).
- The waiver paved the way for India to engage in nuclear trade and led to the **Indo-US Civil Nuclear Deal**. India has since signed **civilian nuclear cooperation agreements** with the **U.S., U.K., France, Canada, Argentina, Australia, Russia, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Namibia, and South Korea**.

- The drive for India's membership got a decisive boost when U.S declared support for India joining the quartet of **multilateral export control regimes**.
- U.S proposed case for a country-specific rather than a criteria-based approach rested on the argument that India's nuclear record and commitment to non-proliferation norms qualified it as a "like minded country" to join the NSG.

**NOTE:** The four multilateral export control regimes are **Wassenaar Arrangement (WA)**, **Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR)**, **Australia Group (AG)** and **Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG)**. India is not a member of NSG only.

## Impediments to India's NSG bid

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- **NSG operates by consensus** and all its current members are signatories to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.
- **China** has relied on an **obstructionist** argument claiming that a "compulsory" requirement for NSG membership is that they must be signatories to the NPT.
- **China equates India with Pakistan** — which has an established history of nuclear proliferation, further complicating the scenario.

## Significance of NSG Membership for India

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- Membership of NSG will **increase India's access to state-of-the-art nuclear technology** from members of the Group.
- As per India's commitment under the **Paris climate agreement**, it has to ensure that **40% of its energy is sourced from renewable and clean sources by 2030**. In order to achieve this target, India needs to scale up nuclear power production. This can only happen if India gains access to NSG.
- Some nations are restricted by regional treaties (For eg., **Pelindaba Treaty**) to provide access to nuclear fuel and technology to India. If India joins the NSG, such restrictions are expected to be done away with.

### **Pelindaba Treaty (African Nuclear Weapon Free Zone Treaty)**

- It establishes a **Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Africa**.
- The treaty was signed in 1996 and came into effect in July 2009.
- It aims at preventing nuclear proliferation and preventing strategic minerals of Africa from being exported freely.
- This treaty **prohibits member parties to come into bilateral agreement with countries who are non signatories of NPT**.
- In **2016**, Namibia criticized the Treaty of Pelindaba for **disallowing Namibia to trade uranium to India** because India is not a member of the NPT.

## India and Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)

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- The **NPT is an international treaty** whose **objective is to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology**, to foster the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and to further the goal of disarmament.
- It represents the only **binding commitment** in a multilateral treaty to the goal of disarmament by the nuclear-weapon States.
- **Nuclear-weapon states parties under the NPT** are defined as those that manufactured and exploded a nuclear weapon or other nuclear explosive device before **January 1, 1967**.
- India did not sign it as the **treaty was discriminatory**. India argued that **treaties like NPT were selectively applicable to only non-nuclear powers** and legitimized the monopoly of nuclear power by a few.
- Consequently India **conducted nuclear explosion test in May 1974**, all along maintaining that it was **committed to peaceful use of atomic energy**.
- In **1998**, India again **conducted a nuclear explosion tests**, and acquired the **capacity to use nuclear energy for military purposes**.
- To alleviate the fears of a world community, **India formulated a comprehensive nuclear doctrine**. The major tenets of this doctrine are:
  - Maintenance of a **credible minimum nuclear deterrence**.
  - Professes **no first use policy**.
  - Commitment to **global veritable and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament** leading to a nuclear weapons free world.
- India has abided by both NPT and **Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT)** even though it is a non-signatory. This along with its commitments on nuclear non-proliferation under NSG waiver in 2008 provides India with a strong basis for membership in NSG.

### CTBT

- The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is the treaty banning all nuclear explosions - everywhere, by everyone.
- The Treaty was negotiated at the **Conference on Disarmament in Geneva** and adopted by the **United Nations General Assembly**. It opened for signature on 24 September 1996.