



drishti

NPT Must for India's Entry into NSG : China

 drishtiias.com/printpdf/npt-must-for-india-s-entry-into-nsg-china

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)

- 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

- **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

- 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)

- 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.