Day: Current Affairs (CSS-2025) Date: 5-8-25

Q.5: Discuss the major contours of Nuclear Non-Proliferation Regime and discuss the prospects of their success / failure with reference to India-US Strategic Partnership.

## Introduction:

Nuclear Non-Proliferation Regime is a set of international efforts towards a peaceful and Nuclear arms free world. The regime comprises of Treaties, agreements and organization. The objectives of the regime are to stop nuclear proliferation, disarmament of Nuclear Weapons, and peaceful nuclear co-operations. The regime has many success stories in past. However, in last decade, Americas increasing biasness towards India and strategic partnership brought unrest in the world and questioned the future of the regime as well. Although, this move by USA has triggered an unstability in South Asia, eroded the credibility of the regime and invoked possibility of parallel nuclear trade networks; but at the same time, it opened a door for inclusion of non-NPT Nuclear Powers into the regime. Increasing the

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scope of regime while ensuring universality can bring out nuclear non-proliferation regime from stalemate.

## Major Contours of Nuclear Non-Proliferation Regime

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Regime consists of institutions (Nuclear Supplier Group (NSG), International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)) and treaties (Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT)). It also constitutes regional agreements of Nuclear Weapon free Zones (NWFZs).

- 1957 → IAEA
- 1968 → NPT
- 1974 → NSG
- 1990 → FMCT
- 1996 → CTBT

### 1. International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) - 1957

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) was

formed by United Nations in 1957 to safeguard and monitor the use of Nuclear materials and technologies for civil purposes. IAEA teams regularly visits nuclear sites of states to insure peaceful use of nuclear energy. IAEA promotes and supports ↑member countries in developing peaceful nuclear facilities.

Effectiveness / Challenges

→ IAEA has many succesful peaceful ↑nuclear projects including cancer treatment initiative "Ray of Hope".

→ It received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2005 for its ↑nuclear non-proliferation efforts.

## 2. Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) - 1968

The Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) of nuclear weapons was opened for signatures in 1968 and it came into force in 1970. The core objective of NPT is to stop spread of nuclear weapons (non-proliferation), disarmament of nuclear weapons by Nuclear Weapon States (NWS) and to facilitate peaceful nuclear co-operation.

keep the description of a single argument a bit brief.

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NPT divides the signatories into two categories Nuclear Weapon States (NWS) and Non-Nuclear Weapon States (NNWS). NWS includes US, Russia, UK, France and China, while the rest are NNWS. According to the Treaty, NNWS must not acquire Nuclear Weapons and must accept IAEA safeguards for peaceful nuclear programes; while NWS States must not develop more nuclear weapons and instead must work towards disarmament of nuclear weapons, but have right towards peaceful nuclear programes development under IAEA safeguards.

Effectiveness / Challenges

a. It has been remarkably successful in stopping proliferation of nuclear weapons. Major success includes South Africa dismantling its nuclear weapons and signing NPT; ~~and~~

add and highlight references/examples against these arguments.

b. Infinite extension of NPT in 1995, ~~ga removed~~ to remove 25-year limit for disarmament, weakened international non-proliferation efforts by discriminating NWS.

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C- Many nuclear states like Pakistan, India and Israel have not signed NPT, Till to date.

## 3. Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG)- 1974

Nuclear suppliers Group (NSG) is a multilateral association of 48 countries which was formed in 1974 after India conducted its first nuclear weapon Test. The objective of NSG was to promote supply of nuclear materials between member countries for peaceful purposes and it hinders nuclear exports to Non-NPT States.

### Effectiveness / challenges

NSG lacks legal binding, leaving vacuum for proliferation.

## 4. Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT)- 1990

FMCT was proposed in 1990 to ban production of weapons grade fissile material. FMCT couldnot be signed due to stalemate as Pakistan

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feared Indian stockpile of nuclear fissile material (weapon grade) and Treaty did not proposed any way forward for existing stock piles.

## 5. Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) - 1996

Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty was signed by more than 150 countries in 1996. The objective of the treaty was to ban all nuclear explosions.

### Effectiveness / challenges

The Treaty remains in limbo as the 8 key states i.e. nuclear states (US, Iran, China, India, Pakistan, Israel etc.) did not ratify the treaty.

## 6. Nuclear Weapon Free Zones (NWFZs)

As a part of nuclear non-proliferation regime, many regional blocks have signed treaties to declare their region as NWFZs. Examples include Africa, Central Asia etc.

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## Global Perception of Nuclear Non-Proliferation Regime

Non-Proliferation regime of nuclear weapons has been effective at maintaining nuclear peace. However, it is critized for giving leverage to its permanent hierarchy (US, UK, China, Russia, France) and restricting other states, especially after infinite expansion of NPT after 1995. Criticism is based on the fact that not only these states's nuclear weapons are intact but instead they are building more. US Energy Department declared more than 3500 warheads in 2024. This discrimination gave a global message that nuclear weapons are the ultimate tools of power. This perception invoked many countries to secretly pursue their Nuclear Programs, for example Iran and North Korea.

## India - US Strategic Partnership - The final Nail in the Coffin

With Nuclear Non-proliferation Regime, already

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weakening and losing its actual spirit, India - US nuclear strategic partnership in 2008 proved to be the last nail in the coffin. In order to build its alliance in South-Asia and to control the increasing dominance of China in the area, US signed nuclear deal with India under 123 agreement.

US-India Nuclear Deal

NSG Waiver - 2008

US provided India extra ordinary support to enhance its nuclear programs - US allowed India to engage in nuclear trade with NSG despite not being NPT state.

## Exception in IAEA Safeguards

US leveraged India to put 14 of 22 reactors under IAEA safeguards, leaving military facilities out side.

## Success / Failure Prospects of Nuclear Non-Proliferation Regime.

US-India nuclear strategic partnership has put a setbacks on non-proliferation regime, creating unrest in the countries across the globe. The possible future prospects of the regime are covered next:

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## 1. Erosion of NPR Credibility

While NPR already discriminates recognized nuclear weapon states, the special exemptions and waivers for India have added another dimension of discrimination. Universal compliance and long terms stability of regime will decline as states would lose confidence in the regime. Many states have started their nuclear programs, perceiving the non-credibility (i.e. Iran being the example).

## 2. Rise of Nuclear Instability in South Asia

Provision of nuclear reactors and fuels to India is boosting its military standing in South Asia. Pakistan and India has history of wars. The recent escalation "Marqa-e-Haq" or "Operation Sindoor" is an example where within 78 hours, signals of nuclear war started ringing. For its existence on the map of the world, Pakistan needs to have minimum deterrance capability. According to SIPRI annual review 2024, "India's increasing number of war heads has crossed Pakistan and is now focusing on competing with China". So,

as a result of security dilema, the three nuclear powers of South-Asia are now in arms race to protect their existence and progress.

## Resentment of Non-NPT States (Nuclear)

Till now, non-NPT nuclear states were not given access to NSG even for their civil programs. NSG waiver for India, created resentment in these countries.

Pakistan, despite being a non-NPT state, has voluntarily accepted IAEA safeguards. Despite major energy crisis in Pakistan, the acquisition of Chashma-III and Chashma-IV reactors, purely for civilian energy needs is highly criticized by Washington. Although the reactors will be kept under international safeguards, and are being acquired from China (NWS) so there is not risk of proliferation, but US still decided to oppose.

Iran has signed nuclear deal in 2015, but its nuclear programs are still bombed by Israel with US backing.

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Remaining Non-NPT states (except India) are not permitted in NSG. The resentment thus created can result in aggression and possibility of proliferation.

4- Possibility of alternate Nuclear Trade Networks

Despite opposition of China and several countries, India's NSG waiver could possibly lead to alternative nuclear trade networks, where rising super powers would support other countries in their nuclear programmes to build alliances as US did with India. These alternatives would highly increase the risks of nuclear proliferation.

5- Opening of a door for inclusion of non-NPT nuclear states in Nuclear Non-Proliferation Regime

One of the positive aspects of US-India strategic partnership could be the opening of a door for inclusion of non-NPT nuclear states in the regime. Generalization of the exceptions given to India can nullify many of upcoming risks and increase chances of revival of the regime.

discuss the 2nd part of the answer in detail as well.

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## Critical Analysis

US - India Strategic Partnership is a geo-political agenda of US to counter China's increasing influence in South-Asia, and build his own alliance in the form of India.

The leverages given to India have given rise to political unrest on international level, resulting in more countries demanding similar treatment, like Pakistan and more countries trying to acquire nuclear power. This trend has badly effected stability of NPR.

In order to counter the factors contributing to failure of NPR, it is recommended to generalise the exceptions of India for other non-NPT states. The charter of NPT may be revised to define ruling and operating procedures for non-NPT nuclear states to join NPT and NSG. Discrimination among nations/powers should be avoided. Way outs should be defined and strict laws be made and enforced for proper disarmament of existing nuclear weapons.

work on the structure. use subheadings.

## Conclusion

Nuclear Non-Proliferation Regime was established with an aim to have a peaceful world, free from weapons of mass destructions, to avoid what Hiroshima and Nagasaki suffered in Aug 1945, and the after effects they have seen. However, unfortunately, it become another tool for super powers to extend and expand their nuclear programs, while making sure no else gets access. With this discrimination already there, a US induced a new trigger in the show by awarding waivers and exceptions to India to strengthen its nuclear programme. This geo-political move of Trump, resulted in NPR loosing its credibility. Once very effective, NPR and world peace is at a greater risk of nuclear proliferation, if no measures are taken to handle the situation.

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# Notes for the Examiner (NOA)

1- I am having trouble with maintaining length of the answer. The current answer is of 13 pages and took me around 3 hours to think, structure and write it down.

keep practicing and try to be focused on the qs statement.

Kindly guide me on how to decide ~~to~~ what to write and how much to write.

2- What should be the ideal length of a 20 mark question, so that all questions can be completed, ~~not~~ in given time -

8-9 sides of a page with 12-15 good relevant arguments.

3- ~~Other~~ I would request general guidelines, as well as specific guidelines for this question. i.e. What's extra written here, which shouldn't needed, how to improve headings? How to reduce argument length, still keeping it strong and still maintaining flow of the answer.