

## **Indo-US Nuclear Deal – 123 Agreement Talking points**

### ***A Young India, Inc. communiqué to Indian Members of Parliament***

#### **Overarching Theme**

The sentiment of partnership behind the Indo-US nuclear deal needs to be applauded, but the wisdom of using nuclear energy co-operation as the symbol of strengthened ties between the two great democracies is questionable.

It is important that people/members who oppose the deal offer alternatives and make it categorically clear that the opposition is to the specifics of the 123 agreement, and not improved bilateral relations between India and the United States.

Increased energy capacity for India must be a crucial goal for India's foreign policy. However, emphasis should be on energy security through energy independence. This deal is lacking on the energy sufficiency front as it the expenditure it incurs will take away from much needed investment in developing alternate technologies that will deliver us the aspired independence from foreign fuel. India must strive for a non-carbon, non-nuclear economy by the middle of the century. Studies to achieve such a state at a reasonable cost have been made for other countries and must be done for India as well.

The argument that this deal will usher in new trade and thus should be accepted is weak. If trade is the goal then policymakers should sign a meaningful trade deal.

#### **Points for Debate**

- *The safety threat posed by nuclear reactors is very high. A nuclear accident in a populous nation like India can cause massive damage to human life. The government must ensure that proper safeguards are implemented at the new nuclear sites and there is transparency in the process of selection and management of the sites.*  
**QUESTION:** What is the government's specific response plan to such a disaster and to what degree has it been verified and tested?
- *The government of India will have to give American nuclear plant makers and operators liability waivers since entities to insure such plants do not exist. This would mean in the event of a nuclear disaster the government of India would have to bear the cost of compensating the hundreds of thousands that could die and the millions that would be injured. Not to mention the severe impact on the environment.*  
**QUESTION:** The government should lay out its liability plans. Let's prevent another Bhopal.

- *India will possibly spend up to \$100 billion to purchase new nuclear power plants and related technology, according to the US Chamber of Commerce.*  
**QUESTION:** Is this a worthy investment given the energy returns? The government should be questioned to justify this planned expenditure. And why such a big investment is not being made into renewable energy (\$2.5 billion in the XI Plan), which potentially holds the key to India's energy security and independence?
- *Investing similar resources in promoting clean, renewable, and decentralized AND diversified sources of energy is more advisable given India's severely lossy transmission and distribution system.*  
**QUESTION:** How is nuclear power generation overcoming the existing problems with the system that it shall use for transmission and distribution? The Electricity Act of 2003 is progressive in its administrative and regulatory outlook but deficient on the technical challenges, which underscore the larger problem of reliable electrification?
- *While the United States has assured a steady supply of nuclear fuel in the 123 agreement, it is hard to conceive that it is in the position to do that, without the express consent of other entities in the Nuclear Supplies Group.*  
**QUESTION:** Would it not be extremely unfortunate to be in a situation in a few years, where India has invested billions of dollars in nuclear plants, but is dependent on foreign sources of nuclear fuel? Does this not go against India's need for energy security through energy independence?
- *This deal jeopardizes the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation efforts globally.*  
**QUESTION:** What is India doing to compensate for this rupture in the non-proliferation regime? Even if the government's contention is that the NPT is discriminatory we as a nation must make our commitment to non-proliferation clear through specific steps and proposing alternative mechanisms to achieve it. Such ideas should be presented to the nation and the world.
- *If the deal is successful and translates into construction and operation of new nuclear plants, it is imperative that the government has a carefully planned strategy for proper handling of radioactive waste from the power plant.*  
**QUESTION:** In a nation with such high population density where exactly is the government planning to dispose off the nuclear waste? A comprehensive nuclear waste management plan must be shared with the nation.