

NSG Membership for India and Pakistan: Debating 'Critical' Aspects

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Abstract

The Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) is seized with membership applications of India and Pakistan. It is the first time in the history of the NSG that two non-State Parties to the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and nuclear armed neighbours, are simultaneously vying to become NSG members. Owing to the complexity of the issue, the NSG has chosen a cautious path to discuss 'technical, legal and political' aspects of their membership in the broader context of non-NPT states before considering specific applications. This article begins by tracing the evolution of the NSG and the expansion in its membership to determine if non-NPT status and NSG membership are in anyway reconcilable. Its main section then examines several underlying issues within these 'critical' aspects. It concludes that the issue of NSG membership for India and Pakistan provides a rare opportunity that can not only help universalise global non-proliferation norms but may also contribute to stability in South Asia.

Keywords: Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), Nuclear Safeguards, 2008 NSG Exemption, Non-proliferation Criteria, Enrichment and Reprocessing (ENR), Non-Nuclear-Weapon States (NNWS).

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