

MONTEREY INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES/MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE

Apropos the Australian NGO request for any input MIIS might want to contribute vis-à-vis the Indian nuclear program and Australian relations to it, we have read through commentary and talked with informed colleagues (US and otherwise). The bottom line is that India has not separated its civilian and military programs and retains a number of civilian facilities that are outside safeguards and linked to its military programs. Under its safeguards agreement with the IAEA safeguarded and unsafeguarded nuclear material can be used together and unsafeguarded nuclear material can be substituted one for the other whereby safeguarded material could end up in a military program. This raises the question of whether the rules should be changed and if not whether Australia should reconsider its involvement and cooperation with India in this field. Bearing in mind that Australian agreements with the Soviet Union and China are more rigorous and do not allow for this kind of flexibility the question arises whether Australia should seek revision of its nuclear cooperation arrangements with India so as to bring it into line with arrangements made with virtually all other states including nuclear weapon states. It is unsettling to say the least for there to be such disparity. As some have noted, under current arrangements India enjoys a virtually unique flexibility which raises questions in the minds of other states and potentially undermines the nonproliferation regime. The objective should be to optimize the benefits of atomic energy for civil purposes, not to perpetuate a situation that comingles civil and military and serves as a model that others may seek to emulate. Given Australia's commitment to non-proliferation, and its long standing commitment to safeguards as reflected in all of its other cooperative arrangements it would seem imperative that Australia revise the terms of agreement with India to bring it into line with virtually all other partner states, and in doing so contribute to and reinforce the non-proliferation norm.

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