**Why Pakistan deserves to strikea civil nuclear energy deal**

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It is reliably learnt that in 2015, the Democratic Obama administration was candidly considering to strike a civil nuclear energy deal like the one that the US had dealt with India in 2005. But why such a deal was not concluded simply because it did not really cater to our concerns and objectives. In this backdrop, it is argued that underthe would-be Joe Biden administration, the US-Pakistan talks– to strike a civil nuclear deal– may pragmatically be resumed on the preconditions that such an arrangement should only be acceptable to Pakistan’s nuclear policy managers who justifiably argue thatour nuclear deterrence holds the first and foremost priority vis-à-vis our national security. Yet by separating our military nuclear programmewith that of our civil nuclear programme, Pakistan will highly be justified in striking a civil nuclear energy deal with the US while given the merit of an impeccable record of peaceful nuclear programme accompanied by a foolproof system of our nuclear safety and security and is also entailed by our potentialities to use the nuclear energy regarding our national needs and necessities in a befitting manner.

Pakistan’s pursuit for peaceful nuclear energy is unjustly constrained by the discriminatory barriers on nuclear commerce – a reflection on neo-nuclear apartheid or nuclear segregation meted out us by the powerful nuclear states commanding the fate of the affairs at the NSG we are prejudicially ignored to strike a civil nuclear energy deal despite the fact that Islamabad is constantly engaged in overcoming these barriers and seek non-discriminatory access to nuclear technology.There is no denying that Pakistan has a very strong safety record.Of its nuclear facilities and the country has successfully separated its civilian nuclear programme from its military component and called for pro-active diplomacy.Pakistan has had 70 reactor years of safe operations experience to its credit.

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Robert Einhorn, former Assistant secretary of State for Non-proliferation, maintained that India had managed to get it all “acquiring the ability to import uranium and nuclear reactor technology, obtaining recognition for India’s status as a nuclear power, and preserving all of India’s strategic options, particularly the ability to increase substantially its production of plutonium for nuclear weapons” By India acquiring this deal it has had obvious implications on neighbouring country, Pakistan. Pakistan feels left out and wants to pursue similar deal and have said that they also have increasing energy needs.

Though it is no secret that like India Pakistan is out of nuclear non-proliferation treaty NPT.  Pakistan isunjustly excluded from trade in nuclear plant or materials, which hinders its development of civil nuclear energy. However, China is positive about nuclear cooperation with Pakistan, and a 2018 International Atomic Energy Agency programme further supports civil nuclear power.The 123 agreement was signed on 8 October 2008; the legislation is formally titled the “United States-India Nuclear Cooperation Approval and Non-proliferation Enhancement Act.” India agreed to separate its military sector of its nuclear program from its civilian sector and to place it under IAEA safeguards. By all fair means, Pakistan could negotiate the same deal with the US or China on the same terms that India agreed to adhere.

Islamabad has fostered tremendous assistance to interested states with the experience and expertise we have gained in the areas of nuclear power generation, non-power application of nuclear technology, nuclear security and safety, under the auspices of IAEA. Pakistan Nuclear Emergency Management System (NEMS) to handle nuclear and radiological emergencies. Covering the entire range of activities, the mechanism has state-of-the-art equipment, mobile labs, technical guidance and countrywide connectivity. For the first responders, emergency response personnel and front-line officers are regularly trained. In 2012, Pakistan established Center of Excellence for Nuclear Security (PCENS) which imparts security training based on international best practices and standards. PCENS is now functioning as a regional hub on all nuclear security aspects. The areas where Pakistan has instituted measures in the broader realm of nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear security are legislative, legal, regulatory, institutional development, operational and enforcement, and international cooperation.

Nuclear security has an organic relation with nuclear management. Pakistan’s national Command and Control structures are structured under three vital Constituents: Constituent 1— the National Command Authority (NCA).Constituent 2— the Strategic Plans Division (SPD). Constituent 3— the Strategic Forces Commands. Pakistan attaches its highest importance to nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear security. As generic evidence, in the last 18 years, despite a difficult internal security situation, none of Pakistan’s nuclear facilities have had faced any threat of proliferation or security because of the extra ordinary professionally conceived and implemented non-proliferation and security measures put in place by the SPD.With a trust-enhancing cooperation agreement signed recently between the IAEA and Islamabad,  the IAEA has designated the Pakistan Institute of Engineering and Applied Sciences (PIEAS) as an IAEA Collaborating Centre to support Member States on research, development and capacity building in the application of advanced and innovative nuclear technologies.

Today, to benefit humankind, radiation is used in medicine, academics, and industry, as well as for generating electricity.  The peaceful use of the nuclear energy sectorspans seven major areas: power generation, minerals exploration, developing high-yield stress tolerant crops, cancer treatment, design and fabrication of industrial plants and equipment and human resource development. Today, Pakistan is one of ten countries in the clear energy sector has contributed to the socio-economic uplift of Pakistan and there is ample space for growth in this industry world to operate a complete nuclear fuel cycle and is amongst 30 countries that have nuclear power plants in operation.

Notably, there are 40 more countries that are planning to begin a nuclear power program. Pakistan has a remarkable experience in safe and secure operation of nuclear power plants. We have the expertise and the ability to supply items, goods and services for a full range of nuclear applications for peaceful uses. We are the 6th most populous country in the world and so far, a fossil fuel deficient country. The energy supply and demand gap is increasing and strains our economic growth.

Additionally, Pakistan is a major victim of global climate change even though it contributes very little to the global greenhouse gas emissions. This situation calls for use of clean energy resources like nuclear energy that provide a reliable and base-load power generation capability. Base load power sources are the plants that operate continuously to meet the minimum level of power demand 24/7. Some clean sources of energy like solar and wind cannot pick the base load. That is one of the reasons that our reliance on nuclear power generation is increasing as a carbon emission free and reliable source that seldom breaks down. KANUPP and four power plants in Chashma provide 1430 MWe to national grid.

Given Pakistan’s worthy record of  dealing with the  IAEA and its continuous resolve to cooperate with the IAEA nuclear safeguards, Islamabad richly deserves to be fairly treated in its pursuit of seeking a deal of civil nuclear technology.