

Iran to Pull Out of NPT

CURRENT AFFAIR

- Iran has warned to withdraw from the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) if the European Nations refer the dispute over its atomic programme to the United Nation Security Council.

Background

- Iran had signed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) with US, UK, France, Germany, Russia and China in 2015 that had offered it access to global trade in return for accepting curbs to its atomic program.
- In 2018, the US unilaterally pulled out the pact and reimposed sanctions on Iran.
- Recently, the top Iranian general Qassem Soleimani was assassinated by the US during his visit to Iraq. This has escalated tensions in the international arena.
- Amid rising tensions, Britain, France and Germany declared that Iran was violating the 2015 pact and have launched a dispute mechanism that could eventually see the matter referred back to the Security Council and the reimposition of U.N. sanctions.

Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)

- JCPOA is also known as the "Iran deal" or "Iran nuclear deal".
- The deal was made in July 2015.
- It is an agreement on Iran's nuclear program made between Iran, the P5+1 (the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council—China, France, Russia, United Kingdom, United States—plus Germany) and the European Union.
- JCPOA limits Iran's uranium enrichment programme until 2030 and contains monitoring and transparency measures that will remain in place long after that date.
- A few days after the JCPOA was agreed, it was endorsed by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).
- However, in May 2018, United States announced its withdrawal from JCPOA.

PROVISIONS

- Under the deal:
- most of Iran's enriched uranium was shipped out of the country
- a heavy water facility was rendered inoperable
- operational nuclear facilities were brought under international inspection
- In return, the deal involved lifting of international sanctions on Iran.

Why has US pulled out of the deal?

- Trump and opponents to the deal say it is flawed because it gives Iran access to billions of dollars but does not address Iran's support for groups the U.S. considers terrorists, like Hamas and Hezbollah.
- They note it also doesn't curb Iran's development of ballistic missiles and that the deal phases out by 2030.
- They say Iran has lied about its nuclear program in the past.

Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)

- The NPT is an international treaty whose objective is to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology, to foster the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and to further the goal of disarmament.
- The treaty was signed in 1968 and entered into force in 1970. Presently, it has 190 member states.

Implications

- States without nuclear weapons will not acquire them.
- States with nuclear weapons will pursue disarmament.
- All states can access nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, under safeguards.

Key provisions

- The Treaty defines nuclear weapon states (NWS) as those that had manufactured a nuclear explosive device prior to 1 January 1967. All the other states are therefore considered non-nuclear weapon states (NNWS).
- The five nuclear weapon states are China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States.
- The Treaty does not affect the right of state parties to develop, produce, and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

India's Stand on NPT

- India is one of the only five countries that either did not sign the NPT or signed but withdrew later, thus becoming part of a list that includes Pakistan, Israel, North Korea, and South Sudan.
- India always considered the NPT as discriminatory and had refused to sign it.
- India has opposed the international treaties aimed at non-proliferation since they were selectively applicable to the non-nuclear powers and legitimised the monopoly of the five nuclear weapons powers.



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