

## **Delhi in nuclear wait and watch**

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Mumbai, Aug. 21 (PTI): New Delhi will closely watch the US on what it does to dismantle restrictions against India on civilian nuclear technology and keep an eye on the Nuclear Suppliers Group front before segregating civilian and military nuclear facilities in the country, Atomic Energy Commission chairperson Anil Kakodkar has said.

Last month in Washington, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and US President George W. Bush signed a historic nuclear cooperation agreement after which the US decided to remove the sanctions imposed on India after the Pokhran nuclear tests.

But "before we take up take any reciprocal steps, we have to closely watch what happens to the US laws on restrictions and lifting of embargo and the Nuclear Suppliers Group front," Kakodkar said today.

He added that the act of identification and segregation of the civilian and military nuclear facilities "will be taken up in a phased manner" and will be "purely on reciprocal basis".

The decision on separation of civilian and military nuclear facilities would be purely an Indian one and "every time we do, we will take totality into account. We introduced enough safeguards to protect Indian interests," Kakodkar clarified, adding that "there should be no question of any proliferation concern on full civil nuclear co-operation with India".

The civilian facilities are those which are identified to be not of any national security significance. Therefore, in identifying such facilities, "we have to determine that they are of no national security significance?" the Atomic Energy Commission chairperson emphasised.

"The decision on the method of segregation will also be purely Indian and not dictated by anyone. It is clear that it would not be a one-time job but will be determined as per national requirements that prevail from time to time."

Kakodkar did not rule out external inputs in addition to the existing indigenous nuclear programme to meet India's ever-growing energy requirements. However, "any external co-operation that is forthcoming will be put under specific safeguards. This is consistent with our national policy," he said.

Kakodkar said there is recognition about India that "we are fundamentally strong in research and nuclear technology development".

There is growing awareness that India and China are the two most populous and fastest-growing economies and if they have to carry out business as usual, there would be growing concern for increasing global warming situations. Nuclear energy has been now considered as a clean technology, Kakodkar said.

“We need 10 times more electricity in the next five decades to come and how are we going to meet such large demand? Nuclear power is important in this context.”

“With this growing awareness on environment as well as India’s capability and impeccable track record?, there is a definite change in the mindset among developed nations about India and the Indo-US cooperation statement was the result,” Kakodkar said.

On the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, he said: “As far as India is concerned, our position is clear.... NPT has been a discriminatory treaty and hence we are not a part of it.”