

2. Nuclear Treaty – international relations

As per the Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Iran's Parliament is reviewing a possible exit from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)

1.Introduction

1. Iran's proposed legislation to withdraw from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) marks a significant development in global nuclear politics.
2. It reflects rising tensions in West Asia and the weakening of multilateral nuclear agreements such as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).
3. The issue has implications for global non-proliferation norms, regional stability, and international security.

2.Background- Iran and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Regime

NPT Framework and Objectives

1. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of nuclear weapons, signed in 1968 and operational since 1970, is the cornerstone of global nuclear governance.
2. It seeks to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, promote peaceful nuclear energy, and advance nuclear disarmament.
3. It divides countries into nuclear-weapon states and non-nuclear-weapon states, imposing obligations accordingly.

Iran's Position under NPT

1. Iran is a non-nuclear-weapon state under the NPT and is legally bound not to develop nuclear weapons.
2. It is allowed to pursue civilian nuclear energy under strict monitoring by the International Atomic Energy Agency.
3. Withdrawal from the NPT would remove these legal obligations and monitoring requirements.

3.Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), 2015

Nature and Participants

1. The JCPOA was a multilateral agreement between Iran, the P5+1 countries, and the European Union.
2. It aimed to restrict Iran's nuclear programme in exchange for sanctions relief.

Key Commitments by Iran

1. Iran agreed to limit uranium enrichment levels and reduce its stockpile.
2. It restricted the number and type of centrifuges used.
3. It allowed extensive monitoring and inspections by the IAEA.

Obligations of Other Signatories

1. The United States, European Union, and United Nations agreed to lift nuclear-related sanctions.
2. Limited restrictions remained on issues such as missile development and human rights.
3. A "snapback mechanism" allowed reimposition of sanctions in case of violations.

4.Collapse and Erosion of the JCPOA

US Withdrawal in 2018

1. The United States unilaterally withdrew from the agreement under the Trump administration.
2. Sanctions were reimposed, undermining the deal's economic incentives for Iran.

Resumption of Nuclear Activities by Iran

1. Iran gradually reduced compliance and resumed uranium enrichment.
2. By 2023, enrichment levels approached weapons-grade thresholds, raising global concerns.

Expiry of Key Provisions

1. Several JCPOA provisions began expiring by 2023, weakening its regulatory framework.
2. This has further reduced the effectiveness of the agreement.

5. Proposed Legislation by Iran

Key Provisions

1. Withdrawal from the NPT, removing international legal obligations.
2. Disengagement from commitments linked to the JCPOA.
3. Continued cooperation with other countries for civilian nuclear technology.

Strategic Motivation

1. Response to external pressure and sanctions.
2. Assertion of sovereignty over nuclear policy.
3. Leverage in geopolitical negotiations.

6. Implications of Potential Withdrawal

Global Non-Proliferation Regime

1. Withdrawal would weaken the credibility of the NPT framework.
2. It may encourage other countries to reconsider their commitments.

Regional Security in West Asia

1. Increased risk of nuclear proliferation in a volatile region.
2. Potential arms race involving countries such as Saudi Arabia and Israel.

Impact on International Relations

1. Escalation of tensions between Iran and Western powers.
2. Possibility of stricter sanctions or military confrontation.

Role of International Atomic Energy Agency

1. Reduced access for inspections would limit transparency.
2. Monitoring challenges would increase concerns over nuclear activities.

7. India's Perspective

Strategic Balancing

1. India has strong ties with both Iran and Western countries.
2. It must balance energy security, regional stability, and diplomatic relations.

Position on NPT

1. India is not a signatory to the NPT due to its discriminatory nature.
2. However, it supports global non-proliferation and disarmament efforts.

8. Way Forward

Revival of Diplomatic Engagement

1. Renewed negotiations are essential to restore trust and compliance.
2. Multilateral diplomacy can help revive or replace the JCPOA framework.

Strengthening Global Nuclear Governance

1. Reforming the NPT to address concerns of non-signatory states may enhance its legitimacy.
2. Greater emphasis on disarmament commitments by nuclear-weapon states is necessary.

Regional Security Mechanisms

1. Confidence-building measures and regional dialogue can reduce tensions.
2. Establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones could be explored.

Conclusion

Iran's potential withdrawal from the NPT represents a critical challenge to the global non-proliferation regime. It underscores the fragility of international agreements in the face of geopolitical tensions. Sustained diplomatic efforts and reforms in global nuclear governance are essential to maintain stability and prevent proliferation.

Source- <https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/iranian-parliament-mulls-possible-exit-from-nuclear-treaty/article70804475.ece>

