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## MIT expert discusses U.S.-India nuclear pact

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On the day North Korea announced it had exploded a nuclear bomb, Subrata Ghoshroy, a research associate in the Program in Science, Technology and Society (STS), was in his native India discussing nuclear proliferation with one of India's top atomic scientists. The Indian government had bluntly criticized North Korea, and Ghoshroy, an engineer turned defense analyst, noted the irony of the situation.

India had refused to sign the 1968 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), decrying it as a double standard foisted upon developing nations by superpowers. However, in condemning North Korea, India now "benefits from this double standard," Ghoshroy said.

An expert on nuclear proliferation, Ghoshroy has recently written an essay, "The U.S.-India Nuclear Deal: Triumph of the Business Lobby," published in the series, Audits of the Conventional Wisdom, by the MIT Center for International Studies (CIS).

According to Ghoshroy, the controversial United States-India "civilian nuclear cooperation" agreement would allow India both to keep its nuclear weapons and to attain the status of a nuclear state, all without signing the NPT.

Ghoshroy's 20-year engineering career includes research in high-power lasers, electronic beam and pulse power for both weaponry and civilian applications. He was a staff member of the House National Security Committee from 1997 to 1998. A senior defense analyst with the Government Accountability Office (GAO) for seven years, this year Ghoshroy publicly charged that a GAO report glossed over doctored data in a national missile defense system project. Currently on leave from the GAO, he is teaching and conducting research at MIT.

Q: What will you be doing in STS?

A: I am teaching "The Science, Technology and Politics of Weapons Systems Procurement," a course on the essence of the military-industrial complex and what's driving so much of the development of costly and unnecessary weapons.

Since I arrived at MIT last year, I have also been promoting a major project we are calling "Nuclear Stability in South Asia."

Q: What are some consequences of the United States pushing the nuclear agreement with India, yet labeling other countries 'proliferators'?

A: The U.S. is now trampling on all the proliferation norms that it has advocated for all these years. Because we like India to be our strategic ally, we will (say) it is not a proliferator. But what does it mean to Brazil, to Iran? Countries must be allowed to develop whatever they feel is necessary for their national security. I am NOT saying nuclear weapons are a good thing. But so long as countries that have nuclear weapons threaten other countries with the use of nuclear weapons, it's going to be very, very difficult to stop any country from

acquiring rudimentary capabilities. After all, nuclear capabilities are on the Internet.

Q: Is the U.S. pursuit of an anti-missile shield system realistic?

A: The missile shield was developed the 1960s. After spending, I think, \$1 or \$2 billion, it was shut down the second or third day after it was brought on line. The anti-missile shield that was revived by Ronald Reagan in Star Wars and is now called Son of Star Wars is still technically not a viable system. There are huge technical problems. I'm not in the camp that says it can never be done. But at what price in terms of dollars and stability? In order to deploy this missile shield, the U.S. would have to withdraw from the anti-ballistic missile treaty of 1972-the very treaty that has kept the world safe.

Q: Why is the administration so fixated on this idea?

A: That is one of the mysteries we are exploring in our STS course on weapons procurement. The cliché answer is: Lots of contractors make lots of money. The government has spent \$150-\$160 billion since the days of Reagan's Star Wars in 1983-85, and we have nothing to show for it.

I have worked many years developing high-power lasers for missile defense. Not a single laser worked; we were lying through our teeth about laser capabilities, and this just continues. There is a lack of oversight-and a gravy train that is growing.

Democrats are not completely blameless, either. When President Clinton was in power, he could have done more to have a serious debate, a scientific debate. But nothing was done. I was in the Congress then, and we didn't get much support from the White House.

Q: Is this the kind of thing you're hoping to stop in India?

A: Absolutely. That is really what is motivating me-to catch a U.S.-style military-industrial complex from reinventing itself in a country where they should be really spending their money in AIDS prevention. India has a fast-growing AIDS infection rate, the world's largest now, after sub-Saharan Africa. The country doesn't provide filtered water for the majority of its people. And what are they doing? They want to build a missile shield? For what?

-- Ghoshroy's analysis of the U.S.-India nuclear deal may be found at [web.mit.edu/cis/pdf/Audit\\_09\\_14\\_Ghoshroy.pdf](http://web.mit.edu/cis/pdf/Audit_09_14_Ghoshroy.pdf) (PDF file).