

Nagpur Declaration — The Third National Convention of Coalition for Nuclear Disarmament and Peace

Thursday 14 February 2008, by [CNDP \(India\)](#) (Date first published: 3 February 2008).

- **Resist Indo-US Nuclear Deal!**
- Free South Asia Of Nuclear Danger!
- Abolish Nuclear Weapons Worldwide Now!
- Resist Mindless Drive for Nuclear Power!

The Third National Convention of the Coalition for Nuclear Disarmament and Peace (CNDP), India is held from 1st to 3rd February 2008 in Nagpur, which has a glorious tradition of mobilising for peace and justice. The two earlier conventions were held in Jaipur in 2004 November and in Delhi four years earlier. It bears reiteration that the CNDP was founded to consolidate the nationwide protests conducted in response to the May 1998 nuclear weapon tests by India, and then Pakistan. The CNDP opposes these tests and the acquisition of nuclear weapons by any country including India. It may be recalled that the era of nuclear threat began with the mindless atomic bombings of the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the USA on 6th and 9th August 1945.

We, the assembled delegates at the Convention representing the peace movements in India and coming from various corners of the country, most emphatically reaffirm our firm conviction in reaffirmation of the Jaipur Declaration and our foundational Charter 2000: "Nuclear weapons are means of mass destruction regardless of who wields them. They are weapons of genocide. They can impose horrendous suffering on victims across generations. They destroy the ecosystem. The damage they do is lasting and incurable. The sheer scale and character of the devastation they can cause makes them a profound and distinctive evil. For this and other reasons, the possession, use, or threat of use of nuclear weapons is absolutely immoral." We also with equal emphasis reemphasise "that the use, threat of use, or possession of, and even preparation for making, nuclear weapons is immoral, illegal, and politically unacceptable under"any circumstances"." Not only that, "nuclear deterrence" is absolutely "abhorrent to human sentiment since it implies that a state if required to defend its own existence will act with pitiless disregard for the consequences to its own and its adversary's people."

We again note with great concern the profoundly destabilising effects of the nuclear blasts in May 98. These have been most graphically and irrefutably demonstrated through an extremely dangerous (undeclared) border war in less than a year followed by a ten month long eyeball to eyeball massive confrontation all along the international border and the LoC. These confrontations were laden with the very real threats of nuclear exchange. Despite this experience and much opposition from the peace movements and civil society, the rulers of these two resource-starved countries persist with their pernicious nuclear weapons programmes, which are a tragic diversion from addressing vital social needs. Though there have been no further blasts since 1998, in the teeth of massive waves of international censure, the continuing flight tests of the Agni and Hatf missiles show that the race for

developing nuclear warhead carrying missiles goes on unabated.

The recent political turmoil in Pakistan has graphically underscored the horrifying possibilities of nuclearisation of South Asia spearheaded by India's ugly ambitions. Nevertheless, the most dangerous development since the last CNDP convention has been the Indo-US Nuclear Deal, which is (still) in the process of operationalisation. Starting with the July 18 2005 joint statement issued by George Bush - Manmohan Singh in Washington DC, the process of trying to fashion and complete a deal has aggravated the nuclear danger both globally and also regionally. It, on the one hand, severely undermines the prospects of global nuclear disarmament by (selectively and arbitrarily) legitimising India's nuclear status and, in the process, the possession of nuclear weapons by the existing Nuclear Weapon States - both recognised and unrecognised - and also the aspirations of other actual and potential aspirants. On the other, it would also further intensify the arms race between India and Pakistan - both nuclear and conventional. Pakistan, in fact, made a strong plea for a similar deal. And the brusque refusal by the US, instead of dissuading it, would only further inflame its passions and thereby turn the dangerous nuclear mess in South Asia all the more dangerous. Furthermore, the consequent shift in focus in favour of highly expensive nuclear power, as and when and if at all the deal comes into operation, will significantly distort India's energy options at the cost of efforts to develop environmentally benign and renewable sources of energy. This deal is also an utterly reprehensible move to bring India closer to the US orbit as a regional ally to facilitate the execution of its global imperial ambitions. The CNDP remains unwavering in its consistent and high-pitched opposition to this deal.

With this deeply disturbing background in mind, the Convention further resolves as under:

I. Nuclear Weapons Free Region in South Asia

The CNDP, in active collaboration with other peace movements in the South Asian region and the Pakistan Peace Coalition in particular, will work towards a Nuclear Weapons Free Region in South Asia. It will also try to promote the idea of Nepal as a 'nuclear weapon-free-nation' on the lines of Mongolia and Austria to initiate and reinforce move in that direction. CNDP will also similarly work towards declaration of the whole of erstwhile state of Kashmir, both under Indian and Pakistani control, as a zone of peace.

This move is expected to provide a clear focus and strong momentum to the peace movements in the region and reinforce the forces of peace and radically bring down the nuclear danger by working on a concrete and workable action plan. This is also expected to deeply affect the global mindset and provide a strong, if not decisive, push towards universal nuclear disarmament - our central and abiding goal

A regional convention of the peace activists from the region will be convened in the near future to work out a collective charter.

II. Global Convention on Nuclear Disarmament

The CNDP, in tandem with the essence of Rajiv Gandhi action plan for "A World Free of Nuclear Weapons" - which was submitted to the United Nations on June 9 1988, will work towards a global disarmament convention, under the auspices of the UN, in collaboration with global peace movements towards this objective. The CNDP, in this context, notes with serious concern the total eclipse from the agenda of the UN of the McCloy-Zorin accord on general and complete Disarmament, which had been adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 20 1961. The CNDP urges the UN to forthwith reinitiate action on the same.

The projected global disarmament convention would chart out a clear and unambiguous road-map towards universal, complete and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament within a defined time-frame. This would also enforce, in the run up to the final goal, all nuclear weapon states – declared and undeclared, immediately commence on progressively lowering down the operating statuses of their nuclear weapons, continue with the moratorium on explosive nuclear tests, freeze the programmes for developments of upgraded nuclear warheads and delivery/interception systems, freeze production of fissile materials, provide negative security assurance to all non-nuclear states outside of any “nuclear umbrella”, credibly commit to “no-first-strike” and such other measures in consonance with the goal of nuclear disarmament.

The CNDP will proactively coordinate with various sections of global anti-nuke peace movements and unwaveringly work towards this goal.

III. Intensification of Struggles against Ignoring Safety and Hazardous Impact of Nuclear Power

The, yet to be operationalised, Indo-US nuclear deal has radically fired up the fantasies of the Indian nuclear establishment. Undeterred by its appalling past performance in terms of power production and also safety records, it is all set to embark upon a very ambitious plan of setting up mega nuclear plants dotting the entire coastal belt criminally unmindful of severely traumatic social and potentially disastrous ecological impacts. The CNDP, in keeping with its consistent track record and the mandates of its founding Charter, will actively collaborate with the grassroots people’s movements, many of whom are its constituent members, to resist such mindless moves – singularly lacking in transparency and accountability, and provide all necessary and possible assistances in this regard.

IV. Demand for End of US Occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan, Just Resolution of the Palestine Issue to Ensure Global Peace and Facilitate Nuclear Disarmament

The ugly ambitions of the US ruling elite to establish its unilateral dominance over the whole of the globe by foregrounding its awesome military might, including its nuclear arsenal, to compensate for the increasing inadequacies of its otherwise huge diplomatic/political clout and economic muscles has emerged as the most major threat to the prospects of global nuclear disarmament. The wars on and occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan are vital components of this grand project, also known as the Project for the New American Century (PNAC). The continuing US support for the apartheid Zionist regime of Israel and its inhuman oppression of the Palestinian people is just another facet of this ugly venture.

Consistent with the goal of global nuclear disarmament, the CNDP demands immediate withdrawal of occupation forces from Iraq and Afghanistan. The CNDP also solidarises with the legitimate struggles of the Palestinian people. The CNDP consequently commits itself to actively associate, in all possible manners, with all global, regional and local moves in these directions.

V. Other Related Issues

The CNDP clearly recognises that the spurts in national-chauvinist, majoritarian and militarist ideologies and political practices under whatever political banner, and the state at times playing a role of an active facilitator, by their very nature pose a major threat to anti-nuclear peace movements in India.

The CNDP hence rededicates itself to fight all these pernicious tendencies in all its manifestations in collaboration with other forces fighting for a just, peaceful and harmonious order.

Consistent with its core values, the CNDP reiterates its demand that Indo-Pak peace process be accelerated. It also demands visa-free travel facilities all over the SAARC region towards this goal. It furthermore demands 10% progressive cuts in the so-called “defence” budgets of all the countries in the region. The CNDP commits itself to ally itself with all regional efforts towards these goals.

P.S.

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Dispatch No. 2497 - Year 10 running