

Excerpts from PM's reply to discussion in Rajya Sabha on Civil Nuclear Energy
Cooperation with the United States

August 17, 2006
New Delhi

At the outset, I would like to convey my gratitude to all the Hon'ble Members who have participated in this debate. I am grateful for this opportunity to clarify some of the issues arising from the discussion. I will do so in a non partisan spirit and I have every reason to believe that after I have finished that I will be able to carry the whole House with me. Our Government has never shied away from a full discussion in Parliament on this important issue. On three previous occasions on July 29, 2005, February 27, 2006 and March 7, 2006, I had made detailed statements and discussed this important subject in this august House. Once again, several issues have been raised during the current discussions and I wish to take this opportunity to respond to them. I also intend to cover developments since my last Suo Motu statement of March 7 this year.

2. Two types of comments have been made during the discussion in the House. The first set of issues pertains to the basic orientation of our foreign policy. Some Hon'ble Members have observed that by engaging in discussions with, and allegedly acquiescing in the demands made by the United States, we have compromised the independent nature of our foreign policy.

3. The second set of issues pertain to deviations from the July 18 Joint Statement and the March 2 Separation Plan. Many of the points raised by the Hon'ble Members have also been aired outside Parliament, notably also by some senior members of the scientific establishment. Overall, a listing of the important concerns include the following: that the India-US Nuclear initiative and more particularly the content of the proposed legislation in the US Congress, could undermine the autonomy of our decision-making; limit the options or compromise the integrity of our strategic programme; and adversely affect the future of our scientific research and development. To sum up, this would suggest that India's strategic nuclear autonomy is being compromised and India is allowing itself to be pressurized into accepting new and unacceptable conditions that are deviations from the commitments made by me to Parliament in July 2005 and in February and March this year.

4. I recognize that many of these concerns are borne out of genuine conviction that nothing should be done that would undermine long standing policies that have a bearing on India's vital national security interests. I fully share and subscribe to these sentiments. I would like to assure the Hon'ble Members that negotiations with the US regarding the civilian nuclear deal have not led to any change in the basic orientation of our policies, or

affected our independent judgment of issues of national interest. Last year during my visit to the US, I addressed the National Press Club in the full glare of the media. A question was put to me regarding what I thought about the US intervention in Iraq. In the full public glare of the media I said that it was a mistake. I said the same to President Bush when he visited India. I said India does not find favour with regime change.

5. The thrust of our foreign policy remains the promotion of our national interest. We are unswerving in our commitment to an independent foreign policy. We do recognize the complexities present in an increasingly inter-dependent and multi-polar world. While we recognize that the United States is a pre-eminent power and good relations with the U.S. are in our national interest, this has not in any way clouded our judgment. There are many areas of agreement with the United States, but at the same time there are a number of areas in which we have differences and we have not shied away from making these known to the US, as also expressing them in public. Currently, we are engaged not only with the US but other global powers like Russia, China, the EU, UK, France and Japan. We are also focusing on ASEAN, as well as countries in West Asia, Africa and Latin America. More importantly, we are devoting proportionately larger time and effort in building relations with countries in our immediate neighbourhood like Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Myanmar, and Pakistan. Our relations with all these countries are determined by the dictates of our enlightened national interest and we have not allowed any other country, including the United States, to influence our policies. This will not change as long as I am Prime Minister.

6. I would, hence, again reiterate in view of the apprehensions expressed, that the proposed US legislation on nuclear cooperation with India will not be allowed to become an instrument to compromise India's sovereignty. Our foreign policy is determined solely by our national interests. No legislation enacted in a foreign country can take away from us that sovereign right. Thus there is no question of India being bound by a law passed by a foreign legislature. Our sole guiding principle in regard to our foreign policy, whether it is on Iran or any other country, will be dictated entirely by our national interest.

7. Let me now turn to some of the concerns that have been expressed on the second set of issues regarding possible deviations from assurances given by me in this august House on the July 18, 2005 Joint Statement and the March 2, 2006 Separation Plan. I would like to state categorically that there have neither been nor will there be any compromises on this score and the Government will not allow such compromises to occur in the future.

8. Hon'ble Members will recall that during President Bush's visit to India in March this year, agreement was reached between India and the United States on a Separation Plan in implementation of the India-United States Joint Statement of July 18, 2005. This Separation Plan had identified the nuclear facilities that India was willing to offer, in a phased manner, for IAEA safeguards, contingent on reciprocal actions taken by the

United States. For its part, the United States Administration was required to approach the US Congress for amending its laws and the Nuclear Suppliers' Group for adapting its Guidelines to enable full civilian nuclear cooperation between India and the international community.

9. The US Administration had thereafter approached the US Congress to amend certain provisions of the United States Atomic Energy Act of 1954, which currently prohibit civil nuclear cooperation with India. The US House of Representatives International Relations Committee passed a Bill on the subject on 27th June 2006. The House of Representatives passed the Bill as approved by its International Relations Committee on July 27.

10. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee passed its version of the Bill on June 29, 2006. The US Senate is now expected to vote on this version of the Bill some time in September. We have concerns over both the House and Senate versions of the Bill. Since the two Bills are somewhat different in content, according to US practice they will need to be reconciled to produce a single piece of legislation. After adoption by both the House and the Senate, this would become law when the US President accords his approval. The final shape of the legislation would, therefore, be apparent only when the House and the Senate complete the second stage of assent/adoption.

11. Meanwhile, the US Government has approached the Nuclear Suppliers' Group to adapt its guidelines to enable full civil nuclear cooperation between India and the International community. In March this year, the NSG at its plenary meeting in Brazil held a preliminary discussion on this issue. The matter will be further discussed by the Nuclear Suppliers' Group later this year. On our part, we have separately raised this issue with several countries and urged them to lift the existing restrictions on nuclear supplies to India. I myself have raised this issue with the Heads of State or Government of Russia, France, UK, Japan, Germany, Brazil, Norway, Iceland and Cyprus, among others.

12. In view of the concerns voiced by the Hon'ble Members, I shall try to address each of these concerns in some detail. I shall, however, begin by affirming that our approach is guided by the understandings contained in the July 2005 Joint Statement and the March 2006 Separation Plan. What we can agree with the United States to enable nuclear cooperation must be strictly within these parameters.

13. The key provisions to which references have been made in Parliament and outside are the following:

(i) Full Civil Nuclear Cooperation : The central imperative in our discussions with the United State on Civil Nuclear Cooperation is to ensure the complete and irreversible

removal of existing restrictions imposed on India through iniquitous restrictive trading regimes over the years. We seek the removal of restrictions on all aspects of cooperation and technology transfers pertaining to civil nuclear energy - ranging from nuclear fuel, nuclear reactors, to re-processing spent fuel, i.e. all aspects of a complete nuclear fuel cycle.

This will be the surest guarantee of India's acceptance as a full and equal partner of the international nuclear community, even while preserving the integrity of our three stage nuclear programme and protecting the autonomy of our scientific research and development. We will not agree to any dilution that would prevent us from securing the benefits of full civil nuclear cooperation as amplified above.

(ii) Principle of Reciprocity : I had earlier assured the House that reciprocity is the key to the implementation of our understanding contained in the July 2005 Statement. I stand by that commitment. When we put forward the Separation Plan, we again made it clear to the United States that India could not be expected to take on obligations such as placing its nuclear facilities under safeguards in anticipation of future lifting of restrictions. India and the United States have held one round of discussions on a proposed bilateral cooperation agreement. India and the IAEA have held technical discussions regarding an India-specific Safeguards agreement. Further discussions are required on both these documents. While these parallel efforts are underway, our position is that we will accept only IAEA safeguards on the nuclear facilities, in a phased manner, and as identified for that purpose in the Separation Plan only when all nuclear restrictions on India have been lifted. On July 29 last year, I had stated that before voluntarily placing our civil nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards, we will ensure that all restrictions on India have been lifted. There has been no shift in our position on this point.

(iii) Certification : The draft Senate Bill requires the US President to make an annual report to the Congress that includes certification that India is in full compliance of its non-proliferation and other commitments. We have made it clear to the United States our opposition to these provisions, even if they are projected as non-binding on India, as being contrary to the letter and spirit of the July Statement. We have told the US Administration that the effect of such certification will be to diminish a permanent waiver authority into an annual one. We have also indicated that this would introduce an element of uncertainty regarding future cooperation and is, not acceptable to us.

(iv) India as a State possessing Advanced Nuclear Technology : Hon'ble Members may recall that the July Statement, had acknowledged that India should be regarded as a State with advanced nuclear technology enjoying the same advantages and benefits as other states with advanced nuclear technology, such as the US. The July Statement did not refer to India as a Nuclear Weapons State because that has a particular connotation in the NPT but it explicitly acknowledged the existence of India's military nuclear facilities. It also

meant that India would not attract full-scope safeguards such as those applied to Non-Nuclear Weapon States that are signatories to the NPT and there would be no curbs on continuation of India's nuclear weapon related activities. In these important respects, India would be very much on par with the five Nuclear Weapon States who are signatories to the NPT. Similarly, the Separation Plan provided for an India-specific safeguards agreement with the IAEA with assurances of uninterrupted supply of fuel to reactors together with India's right to take corrective measures in the event fuel supplies are interrupted. We have made clear to the US that India's strategic programme is totally outside the purview of the July Statement, and we oppose any legislative provisions that Mandate scrutiny of either our nuclear weapons programme or our unsafeguarded nuclear facilities.

(v) Safeguards Agreement and Fuel Assurances : In this respect too, it is worth emphasizing that the March 2006 Separation Plan provides for an India-Specific Safeguards Agreement with the IAEA, with assurances of uninterrupted supply of fuel to reactors that would be placed under IAEA safeguards together with India's right to take corrective measures in the event fuel supplies are interrupted. We, of course, have the sovereign right to take all appropriate measures to fully safeguard our interests. An important assurance is the commitment of support for India's right to build up strategic reserves of nuclear fuel over the lifetime of India's reactors. We have initiated technical discussions at the expert level with the IAEA on an India-Specific Safeguards Agreement. Both the Bilateral Nuclear Cooperation Agreement with the United States and the India-Specific Safeguards Agreement with the IAEA would be only within the parameters of the July Statement and the March Separation Plan. There is no question of India signing either a Safeguards Agreement with the IAEA or an Additional Protocol of a type concluded by Non-Nuclear Weapons States who have signed the NPT. We will not accept any verification measures regarding our safeguarded nuclear facilities beyond those contained in an India-Specific Safeguards Agreement with the IAEA. Therefore there is no question of allowing American inspectors to roam around our nuclear facilities.

(vi) Integrity and reliability of our strategic programme – autonomy of decision-making and future scientific research and development: In my statement of March 7, 2006, I had assured Parliament that the Separation Plan would not adversely affect our strategic programme. I reiterate that commitment today. The Separation Plan has been so designed as to ensure adequacy of fissile material and other inputs for our strategic programme, based on our current and assessed future needs. The integrity of our 3-Stage nuclear programme will not be affected. The autonomy of our Research and Development activity, including development of our fast breeder reactors and the thorium programme, in the nuclear field will remain unaffected. We will not accept interference by other countries vis-à-vis the development of our strategic programme. We will not allow external scrutiny of our strategic programme in any manner, much less allow it to be a condition for future nuclear cooperation between India and the international community.

(vii) Moratorium on production of fissile material: Our position on this matter is unambiguous. We are not willing to accept a moratorium on the production of fissile material. We are only committed to negotiate a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, a commitment which was given by the previous government. India is willing to join only a non-discriminatory, multilaterally negotiated and internationally verifiable FMCT, as and when it is concluded in the Conference on Disarmament, again provided our security interests are fully addressed.

(viii) Non-discriminatory Global Nuclear Disarmament: Our commitment towards non-discriminatory global nuclear disarmament remains unwavering, in line with the Rajiv Gandhi Action Plan. There is no dilution on this count. We do not accept proposals put forward from time to time for regional non-proliferation or regional disarmament. Pending global nuclear disarmament, there is no question of India joining the NPT as a non-nuclear weapon state, or accepting full-scope safeguards as a requirement for nuclear supplies to India, now or in the future.

(ix) Cessation of Future Cooperation : There is provision in the proposed US law that were India to detonate a nuclear explosive device, the US will have the right to cease further cooperation. Our position on this is unambiguous. The US has been intimated that reference to nuclear detonation in the India-US Bilateral Nuclear Cooperation Agreement as a condition for future cooperation is not acceptable to us. We are not prepared to go beyond a unilateral voluntary moratorium on nuclear testing as indicated in the July Statement. The same is true of other intrusive non-proliferation benchmarks that are mentioned in the proposed US legislation. India's possession and development of nuclear weapons is an integral part of our national security. This will remain so.

14. Hon'ble Members will appreciate the fact that an international negotiation on nuclear energy cooperation particularly when it involves dismantling restrictive regimes that have lasted for over three decades is a complex and sensitive exercise. What we are attempting today is to put in place new international arrangements that would overturn three decades of iniquitous restrictions. It is inevitable, therefore, that there would be some contradictory pulls and pressures. This does not mean that India will succumb to pressures or accept conditionalities that are contrary to its national interests.

15. I had personally spoken to President Bush in St. Petersburg last month on this issue, and conveyed to him that the proposed US legislation must conform strictly to the parameters of the July 18, 2005 Statement and the March 2, 2006 Separation Plan. This alone would be an acceptable basis for nuclear cooperation between India and the United States. India cannot, and is not prepared to, take on additional commitments outside this agreed framework or allow any extraneous issues to be introduced. I have received an assurance from the US President that it was not his intention to shift goalposts, and that

the parameters of the scope of cooperation would be those contained in the July 2005 Joint Statement and the March 2006 Separation Plan. A White House Statement of Administration Policy of July 26, 2006 recognizes some, though not all, of India's concerns, and conveyed that the Administration has voiced them with the Congress.

16. I can assure you that there is no ambiguity in our position in so far as it has been conveyed to the US. The US is aware of our position that the only way forward is strict adherence to July Statement and March Separation Plan. I am hopeful that the bilateral India-US Civil Nuclear Cooperation Agreement when concluded will take into account the issues raised here. However, I must be honest and frank that I cannot predict with certainty the final form of the US legislation or the outcome of this process with the NSG, which consists of 45 countries with divergent views. We are hopeful that this will lead in a direction wherein our interests are fully protected and that there is a complete lifting of restrictions on India that have existed for three decades. Such an outcome if it materializes will contribute to our long-term energy security by enabling a rapid increase in nuclear power. It would lead to the dismantling of the technology denial regimes that have hampered our development particularly in hi-tech sectors. I will have wide consultations including with the members of the Atomic Energy Commission, the nuclear and scientific communities and others to develop a broad based national consensus on this important matter. I wish to inform members of the House that I have invited members of the Atomic Energy Commission on the 26th August for a meeting. That same day I have also invited the group of distinguished scientists who have expressed concerns to meet me.

17. Finally, I would only like to state that in keeping with our commitments to Parliament and the nation, we will not accept any conditions that go beyond the parameters of the July 18, 2005 Joint Statement and the March 2, 2006 Separation Plan, agreed to between India and the United States. If in their final form the US legislation or the adapted NSG Guidelines impose extraneous conditions on India, the Government will draw the necessary conclusions, consistent with the commitments I have made to Parliament.

[Prime Minister also gave the following responses to points raised by the Left parties]

1. Whether the deal will give "full" civilian nuclear technology and lift all existing sanctions on dual use technology imposed on India for not signing the NPT.

Response: The objective of full civil nuclear cooperation is enshrined in the July Statement. This objective can be realized when current restrictions on nuclear trade with India are fully lifted. In accordance with the July Statement, US has initiated steps to amend its legislation and to approach the NSG to adapt its guidelines. We seek the removal of restrictions on all aspects of cooperation and technology transfers pertaining

to civil nuclear energy – ranging from supply of nuclear fuel, nuclear reactors, reprocessing spent fuel, i.e., all aspects of complete nuclear fuel supply. Only such cooperation would be in keeping with the July Joint Statement.

2. Cannot accept restrictions on Indian foreign policy to be imposed such as on Iran, irrespective of whether it is in the policy section or in the sense of the House section of the legislation.

Response: Government is clear that our commitments are only those that are contained in the July Joint Statement and in the Separation Plan. We cannot accept introduction of extraneous issues on foreign policy. Any prescriptive suggestions in this regard are not acceptable to us.

Our foreign policy is and will be solely determined by our national interests. No legislation enacted in a foreign country can take away from us this sovereign right.

3. Signing of IAEA safeguards in perpetuity for the civilian programme to take place after the US Congress had approved a “123 Nuclear Cooperation Agreement”. All restrictions on India to be lifted before we sign the IAEA safeguards.

Response: I had conveyed to Parliament on July 29, 2005 on my return from Washington that before placing any of our nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards, we will ensure all restrictions on India have been lifted. Under the Separation Plan agreed to with the United States, India has offered to place under IAEA safeguards 14 of its reactors presently operating or under constructions between 2006 and 2014. The nuclear facilities listed in the Separation Plan will be offered for safeguards only after all nuclear restrictions have been lifted on India. This would include suitable amendments to the US legislation to allow for such cooperation, the passing of the bilateral agreement with India and the adaption of the NSG guidelines. It is clear that India cannot be expected to take safeguards obligations on its nuclear facilities in anticipation of future lifting of restrictions.

4. Guarantees on fuel as agreed in the March 2006 statement.

In case the US reneges on supply of fuel, they will ensure continuity through other members of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG).

Response: Separation Plan includes elaborate fuel supply assurances given by the United States. Understandings in the Separation Plan also provide for contingency of disruption of fuel supplies to India. In such a case, the United States and India would jointly

convene a group of friendly supplier countries (Russia, France and United Kingdom) aimed at restoring fuel supplies to India. An important assurance is the commitment of support for India's right to build strategic reserves of fuel over the life time of its nuclear reactors. In the event of disruption of fuel supplies despite the assurances, India will have a right to take corrective measure to ensure the operation of its nuclear reactors.

5. India will work for an FMCT and for nuclear disarmament with all nuclear weapon states, in line with the Rajiv Gandhi Plan or Delhi Declaration in tandem.

Response: Our support for global nuclear disarmament remains unwavering. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi had put forward an Action Plan in the 1988 UNGA Special Session on Disarmament. We remain committed to the central goal of this Action Plan, i.e., complete elimination of nuclear weapons leading to global nuclear disarmament in a time-bound framework. India has agreed to negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva for a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty. There has been no change in our position on this matter.

6. In the original deal, there is no provision for US inspectors, only provision for IAEA inspectors. The draft US Bills contains such provisions.

Response: In the Separation Plan, we have agreed to offer for IAEA safeguards nuclear facilities specified in the Separation Plan for that purpose. The nature of safeguards will be determined by an India specific safeguards agreement with the IAEA. This will be applied to the safeguarded nuclear facilities in India. Therefore, there is no question of accepting other verification measures or third country inspectors to visit our nuclear facilities, outside the framework of the India specific safeguards agreement.

7. An India-specific protocol and not an Additional Protocol as per IAEA Standard Modified Protocol.

Response: In the Separation Plan, we have agreed to conclude an India specific safeguards agreement with the IAEA. The question of an Additional Protocol will arise only after the India specific safeguards agreement is in place. As a country with nuclear weapons, there is no question of India agreeing to a Safeguards agreement or an Additional Protocol applicable to non-nuclear weapon states of the NPT.

8. References to Iran in the House Bill.

Response: We reject the linkage of any extraneous issue to the nuclear understanding. India's foreign policy will be decided on the basis of Indian national interests only.

9. Reference to Proliferation Security Initiative in the House and Senate Bills.

Response: The Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) is an extraneous issue as it is outside the framework of the July 18 Joint Statement. Therefore, we cannot accept it as a condition for implementing the July Statement. Separately, the Government has examined the PSI.

We have certain concerns regarding its legal implications and its linkages with the NPT. We also have concerns with amendments to the suppression of Unlawful Activities at Sea Treaty under the International Maritime Organisation.

10. The Jackson-Vanik Amendment linking the granting of MFN status to USSR to Jewish emigration is an example relevant to the current debate.

Response: We have studied the proposed US legislation very carefully, including the so-called binding and non-binding provisions. The non-binding provisions do not require mandatory action, but at the same time, have a certain weight in the implementation of the legislation as a whole. We have conveyed our concerns to the US Administration in this respect. Jackson-Vanik Amendment was binding on the Administration and cannot be cited as a precedent for non-binding references in the current bills. A more accurate example than the Jackson-Vanik Amendment is the set of provisions accompanying the renewal of MFN status to China, that included references to China's human rights, China's political and religious prisoners, protection of Tibetan heritage and freedom of political expression.

11. Role of Parliament in approving foreign policy.

Response: India follows a Parliamentary model, as specified in our Constitution, wherein treaty making powers rest with the Executive. However, we have kept Parliament fully in the picture regarding various stages of our negotiations with the United States. Broad based domestic consensus cutting across all sections in Parliament and outside will be necessary. We will work towards that objective by addressing various concerns as fully as possible.

[Prime Minister also gave the following responses to points raised by the group of nuclear scientists]

1. "India should continue to be able to hold on to her nuclear option as a strategic requirement in the real world that that we live in, and in the ever-changing complexity of the international political system. This means that we cannot accede to any restraint in perpetuity on our freedom of action. We have not done this for the last 40 years after the Non-Proliferation Treaty came into being, and there is no reason why we should succumb to this now. Universal nuclear disarmament must be our ultimate aim, and until we see the light at the end of the tunnel on this important issue, we cannot accept any agreement in perpetuity."

Response: We are very firm in our determination that agreement with United States on Civil Nuclear Energy in no way affects the requirements of our strategic programme. We are fully conscious of the changing complexity of the international political system. Nuclear weapons are an integral part of our national security and will remain so, pending the global elimination of all nuclear weapons and universal non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament. Our freedom of action with regard to our strategic programmes remains unrestricted. The nuclear agreement will not be allowed to be used as a backdoor method of introducing NPT type restrictions on India. Our offer to put nuclear facilities under safeguards in perpetuity is conditional upon these facilities securing fuel from international sources for their life time. If the fuel supply assurances as enumerated in Separation Plan are disrupted, then India will have the right to take corrective measures to ensure the continued operation of these reactors.

2. 'After 1974, when the major powers discontinued cooperation with us, we have built up our capability in many sensitive technological areas, which need not and should not now be subjected to external control. Safeguards are understandable where external assistance for nuclear materials or technologies are involved. We have agreed to this before, and we can continue to agree to this in the future too, but strictly restricted to those facilities and materials imported from external sources.'

Response: Sensitive nuclear technology facilities have not been covered in the Separation Plan. Therefore, there is no question of putting them under safeguards or under external controls. Even with regard to nuclear facilities that have been included in Separation Plan, safeguards will be applied in phases between 2006 and 2014. These safeguarded facilities will be eligible for and will receive fuel materials and technology from international sources. If such supplies cease, then India will be free to protect its interests through corrective measures. That will be spelt out clearly in the India specific safeguards agreement.

3. 'We find that the Indo-US deal, in the form approved by the US House of Representatives, infringes on our Independence for carrying out indigenous research and

development in nuclear science and technology. Our R&D should not be hampered by external supervision or control, or by the need to satisfy any international body. Research and technology development are the Sovereign rights of any nation. This is especially true when they concern strategic national defence and energy self-sufficiency.'

Response: Our independence for carrying out independent research and development in nuclear science and technology will remain unaffected. There will be no external supervision of our R&D since none of the sensitive R&D facilities which handle nuclear material have been included in the Separation Plan. Nothing in the Separation Plan infringes on our sovereign right to conduct research and technology development concerning our national defence and energy self-sufficiency. Government is committed to preserve the integrity of the three stage nuclear power programme, including utilization of our vast thorium resources. Certain nuclear facilities including centers such as TIFR, Variable Energy Cyclotron Centre, Saha Institute of Nuclear Physics etc., have been designated as civilian in the Separation Plan. As these facilities will not handle nuclear material, there is no question of safeguards being applied to them. We expect these centers to participate as full partners in international collaboration project.

4. 'While the sequence of actions to implement the cooperation could be left for discussion between the two governments, the basic principles on which such actions will rest is the right of Parliament and the people to decide. The Prime Minister has already taken up with President George Bush the issue of the new clauses recommended by the US House of Representatives. If the US Congress, in its wisdom, passes the bill in its present form, the 'product' will become unacceptable to India, and diplomatically, it will be very difficult to change it later. Hence, it is important for our Parliament to work out, and insist on, the ground rules for the nuclear deal, at this stage itself.'

Response: I had taken up with President Bush our concerns regarding provisions in the two bills. It is clear that if the final product is in its current form, India will have grave difficulties in accepting the bills. US has been left in no doubt as to our position. The ground rules for our discussions are clear. These are the parameters of the July Statement and the March Separation Plan and commitments given by me to Parliament in the three Suo Moto Statements and my reply to today's discussions will be the guiding principles of our position. Parliament has been kept fully informed at every stage of the discussions. In their final form, if US legislation or the NSG guidelines impose extraneous conditions on India, the Government will draw the necessary conclusions consistent with my commitments to Parliament.