

## National and Global Leaders Must Stop the US/India Nuclear Trade Deal, Says MPI Chairman, Douglas Roche

*July 23, 2008:* The proposed U.S.-India nuclear trade deal would critically undermine the Non-Proliferation Treaty and must be stopped, former Canadian Senator Douglas Roche, Chairman of the Middle Powers Initiative, said today.

"MPI calls once again on all relevant governments and international authorities to use their authority to stop the agreement from being reached," Senator Roche said.

On July 22, Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh narrowly survived a no-confidence motion by a vote of 275 to 256 after two days of bitter debate, heckling of the Prime Minister and widespread charges of vote-buying. More than a domestic issue, this vote clears the way for vote on the nuclear deal with the US.

The arrangement, first proposed by President Bush and Prime Minister Singh in 2005, would have India accept safeguards on civilian – but not military – nuclear facilities in return for access to the global market of civilian nuclear fuel and technology. This proposal would reverse a 30-year policy of the United States of restricting nuclear-related exports to India, which has never joined the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Should this agreement go through, it will undercut a founding principle of the NPT: the sharing of nuclear technology should be limited to non-nuclear weapon states who have foresworn nuclear weapons by joining the treaty. By striking a special deal with India, the United States is undercutting a primary rationale for non-nuclear weapon states for joining the NPT.

The Middle Powers Initiative insists that this is not merely an agreement that can be struck between the two heads of state. Besides the Indian parliament, the US House and Senate must vote on the deal. Internationally, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) needs to conclude a special safeguard agreement with India and the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) has to agree to waive rules on nuclear transfers to states without full-scope safeguards. The IAEA Board of Governors meets in August and the NSG meets in September. Afterwards, the proposal goes back to the US Congress.

"All these bodies have a responsibility to refuse to support this ill-conceived proposal. In particular, we call on members of the NSG, which must make this decision unanimously, to reject the deal," Senator Roche said.

MPI maintains that the United States and India must show absolute commitment to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation before this agreement can be completed without damaging the NPT. The US and India must sign and ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and a verifiable Fissile Materials Cut-off Treaty. In addition, India must make a formal declaration accepting the NPT obligation of good-faith negotiation for the elimination of nuclear weapons.