



Opening Statement of Senator Joseph R. Biden, Jr. (D-DE)  
Senate Foreign Relations Committee Hearing on  
U.S.-India Atomic Energy Cooperation  
April 26, 2006

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you for chairing this series of hearings on the Administration's nuclear deal with India.

The Administration did not consult us as it negotiated the July 18 Joint Statement between President Bush and Prime Minister Singh.

It paid little attention to our concerns as it negotiated with India regarding India's plan for separating its civil nuclear facilities from its military ones.

And it submitted a legislative proposal to us and a decision proposal to the Nuclear Suppliers Group that were so poorly drafted as to cast doubt on the Administration's seriousness of purpose.

Despite this, I indicated three weeks ago that I will probably support the agreement at the end of the day. I did so because I agree that the time has come to develop a new relationship between India and the parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

And I did so also because undoing this deal could do more damage – in terms of our relationship with India – than approving it, with carefully drafted conditions.

This deal brings risks, and I believe the Administration and Congress must minimize those risks.

So far, Mr. Chairman, the Administration has done a lot more to lobby us than to work with us.

- It has yet to answer our questions for the record.
- It has yet to share its negotiating record or explain just what it agreed to when it accepted the idea of "India-specific safeguards," or "corrective measures that India may take...in the event of disruption of foreign fuel supplies," or U.S. "assurances regarding fuel supply," or "a strategic reserve of nuclear fuel" for India.

- The Administration has yet to share with us the full list of India's civil nuclear facilities – even in classified form.
- And it has reneged on an earlier promise to share drafts of the peaceful nuclear cooperation agreement that it is negotiating with India.

Mr. Chairman, I still think that a new deal for India makes sense. But it isn't a "slam dunk," as they say, and that is why we are here today to take testimony from some of our country's best thinkers on nuclear policy.

Today's witnesses all have impressive backgrounds, and I have relied upon the wisdom of many of them over the years. I look forward to hearing their insights today.

I want to especially thank Bill Perry for coming in from California and for upsetting his schedule in Washington in order to help us today. Dr. Perry is a man who answers his country's call, just as he did regarding North Korea policy after he had retired as Secretary of Defense.

I would recommend that we also schedule a follow-up hearing with experts on the Atomic Energy Act, to discuss possible amendments to S. 2429, and experts on India who could tell us what the consequences of enacting those amendments might be.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, I hope that you will make clear to the Administration that the Senate and this Committee should not be taken for granted.

We expect the Administration to answer our questions, to provide us the details on the related agreements that India is negotiating with the United States and with the IAEA, and to work with us to make S. 2429 a respectable bill.

Until the Administration does that, we simply should not act on its proposed legislation.

Mr. Chairman, we recently received a letter from Ambassador John Ritch, a former staff member of this Committee, in support of the India nuclear deal. I ask that his letter and an attached op-ed from the *International Herald Tribune* be included in today's hearing record.

Thank you.