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UN and Conference Divisions, Ministry of External Affairs, 'Brief on India's position on the question of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South Asia'

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Summary:

Considerations of Pakistan's proposal for a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South Asia

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□ At the initiative of Pakistan, the UN General Assembly has considered at its 29th session in 1974 and 30th session in 1975 the question of declaration and establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free-zone in South Asia.

□ India has a positive approach towards the concept of nuclear-weapon-free-zones (hereafter NWFZs in my version, not in official version). India supports the establishment of NWFZs in those parts of the world, where suitable conditions exist, and where a zone is proposed to be established with the initiative of and agreement amongst the countries in that zone. The Group of Experts drawn from 21 countries, which was appointed by the United Nations to carry out a comprehensive study of the question of NWFZs in all its aspects, has in its report taken the same fundamental approach by adopting the following principle unanimously: "The initiative for the creation of a NWFZ should come from States within the region concerned, and participation must be voluntary."

□ Basing itself on this principled approach, India has tabled a draft resolution at the 29th Session of the UNGA held in 1974, whereby the GA 'considered that the initiative for the creation of a NWFZ in an appropriate region of Asia should come from the States of the region concerned, taking into account its special features and geographical extent." This resolution was adopted by the GA with an overwhelming majority. The 30th Session of the UNGA held in 1975 has adopted without a vote another resolution sponsored by India, according to which the General Assembly "decides to give due consideration to any proposal for the creation of a NWFZ in an appropriate region of Asia, after it has been developed and matured among the interested states within the region concerned."

□ India has adopted a negative approach to Pakistan's proposal for the establishment of a NWFZ in South Asia. India voted against Pakistan's resolution in 1974 and placed on record its position on a similar Pakistani resolution in 1975 that if it had been put to a vote, India would have again cast a negative view.

□ India's position on Pakistan's proposal for the declaration and establishment of a NWFZ in South Asia has stemmed from the following three considerations: □□□ Pakistan's proposal is politically motivated and is part of a propaganda campaign which Pakistan has been carrying on against India's programme for the development of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, particularly against the nuclear experiment conducted by India for peaceful purposes on 18 May 1974.

□□

□ Before taking its proposal to the GA for endorsement, Pakistan did not carry out any consultations with any of the countries in South Asia. Prior consultations are essential in any regional proposal of such a nature, and subsequent consultations can only be held among countries which are willing to join any such proposed arrangement.

□□

□ South Asia is an integral part of the region of Asia and the Pacific. The existence of nuclear weapons in the region of Asia and the Pacific and the presence of foreign military bases in the Indian Ocean make the situation inappropriate for the establishment of a NWFZ in the sub-region of South Asia.

□□

India's nuclear energy programme has been geared from its very inception exclusively to peaceful and developmental purposes.