

India's anti-Iran votes were coerced, says former U.S. official

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Editorial Note

This informative article acknowledges the fact that the Indian government was coerced into voting against Iran at the level of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Vienna, Austria.

Stephen G. Rademaker, the former Assistant Secretary for Nonproliferation and International Security at the U.S. State Department also cautions and advises that a natural gas pipeline linking Iran, Pakistan, and India is not viable because of security factors, instability, and uncertainty. With the recent bombings in southeastern Iran in mind, Rademaker's statements ominously correlate with U.S. interests in preventing the emergence of a natural gas pipeline connecting Iran to India and the Iranian charges of [Anglo-American terrorism](#).

In this regard, the United States and Britain are involved in [creating a zone of insecurity](#) in Iranian border provinces with Iraq, as well as on the Iranian border with Pakistan. The hidden agenda is to halt and obstruct the development of a future natural gas pipeline project linking Iran, Pakistan, and India.

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New Delhi: A former ranking official of the Bush administration acknowledged on Thursday that India's votes against Iran at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) were "coerced."

In a talk on 'Iran, North Korea and the future of the NPT' at the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, Stephen G. Rademaker — who quit his job as Assistant Secretary for Nonproliferation and International Security at the U.S. State Department last December — said the July 2005 nuclear agreement had helped bring about a big change in India's attitude towards "non-proliferation."

"The best illustration of this is the two votes India cast against Iran at the IAEA," he said, adding: "I am the first person to admit that the votes were coerced."

A key role in the entire process was played by the Congressional hearings on the nuclear deal, the former State Department official noted.

Congressional Vote

“In the end, India did not vote the wrong way,” he said. And India’s votes against Iran, in turn, “paved the way for the Congressional vote on the civilian nuclear proposal last year.”

Mr. Rademaker joined the State Department in 2002 as Assistant Secretary of State for Arms Control and was put in charge of the combined bureaus of arms control and non-proliferation in 2005. At the end of 2006, he quit the U.S. government to take up a job with Barbour Griffith & Rogers, the lobbying firm whose clients include the Government of India.

During the time he served in the State Department, Mr. Rademaker was involved in bilateral negotiations with India on nuclear matters. He also headed the U.S. delegation to two meetings of the Nuclear Suppliers Group held soon after the July 2005 Indo-U.S. nuclear deal.

Though the civil nuclear bill had now cleared Congress, said Mr. Rademaker, “more is going to be required [of India] because the problems of Iran and North Korea have not been solved.”

The former Bush administration official claimed Iran was developing nuclear weapons and that the international community was going to have to take tougher measures to persuade Iran to change course. “Whether there will be more U.N. sanctions or more measures taken outside the U.N. context, we’ll have to see.” Russia, said Mr. Rademaker, was “not fully cooperating” with the U.S.

“If the U.N. Security Council acts against Iran, this would make things easier for countries like India. But if things go in the direction of increasing economic pressure by a coalition of countries like the U.S, Europe and Japan, India will have to make a choice,” he said. India would have to decide whether to join these countries in the economic measures they took. “It is India’s prerogative to decide, but should it (not join), it would be a big mistake and a lost opportunity,” he added.

The July 2005 Indo-U.S. nuclear agreement had “opened a door for India to further its integration with the industrialised world and it would be bad for India to squander this opportunity,” Mr. Rademaker said. “So I hope India, for its own self-interest, decides to participate (in these measures).”

‘A low cost way’

As a “first step” towards tightening the screws on Iran, India should withdraw from the proposed Iran-Pakistan-India pipeline project, the former U.S. official argued. “This would send a strong message to Iran, while not hurting India’s economic interests” because the pipeline was unlikely to be economically viable, he claimed. “I am not sure what kind of investor would put up money for a pipeline running from Iran through Pakistan. What happens if there is an incident in Kashmir?”

Walking away from the IPI pipeline project, said Mr. Rademaker, would, therefore, be “a low cost way of India demonstrating its commitment to non-proliferation.”

He clarified that the U.S. did not consider the Iran pipeline to be a “litmus test” for India. But scrapping the project “would be a smart thing for India to do.” India, he stressed, “needs to stop thinking of itself as a Third World country... and start aligning itself with the First World

countries.”

Asked about the possibility of U.S. military action against Iran, Mr. Rademaker said, “I have never been a proponent of military strikes against Iran because I am not persuaded they would be effective.”

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