

'No country can put itself opposite NPT': China strongly reacts to India's assertion

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Beijing: With India making it absolutely clear that it will never sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) for gaining entry into NSG, an adamant China on Thursday said "no country should or can put itself opposite the NPT".

Chinese President

"We have repeatedly stated our position on the accession of non-NPT countries into the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG)," Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Lu Kang said here, reacting to External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj's statement in the Lok Sabha+ on Wednesday that India will not sign the NPT.

"It is worth mentioning that China does not make the rules for how to become new members of the group. The international community has forged a consensus long ago that the NPT is the cornerstone of the international non-proliferation regime. No country should or can put itself opposite to the NPT," Lu said.

Swaraj had said India is engaging with China to iron out differences after Beijing created "procedural hurdles" for its entry into the 48-member NSG but made it clear that government will never ink NPT, which only recognises five countries – the US, Russia, the UK, France and China – as nuclear weapon states.

Swaraj said China had raised questions+ over how a non-NPT signatory could become a member of the NSG.

"But we are engaging with it. We have not stopped efforts. If someone says 'no' for once, it does not mean he won't agree at all," she said.

Lu's comments on Wednesday stated that there is no change in China's stand on the NPT and that the new members wanting to join the NSG should sign it. Beijing in the past has insisted on consensus over the entry of new members into grouping after majority of the nuclear trading club backed India's case.

In a setback to India's efforts to join the grouping, the NSG plenary held in South Korea last month decided against accepting the country's membership application after China and some other nations opposed entry of a non-NPT signatory.

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