

India will not sign CTBT: PM

India will not sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) that prevents it from conducting further nuclear tests and impinges on its sovereignty, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said Wednesday.

Addressing new recruits of the Indian Foreign Service at a function, the prime minister also stressed that the nuclear deal India had signed with the US protected its 'national interests'.

'Despite the fact that we are not a signatory to the NPT (Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty), and we have also said that if the CTBT came into being we will not sign it, there is no pressure from the US on India to sign the NPT or any other international arrangement of that sort to enter into nuclear cooperation for civil energy,' Manmohan Singh said.

Though it has not signed the CTBT, India has put a moratorium on further tests since the nuclear tests at Pokhran in May 1998. The Left parties and opposition parties have warned that if India signs the nuclear deal with the US, it would be prevented from conducting further tests.

The prime minister's remarks on the nuclear deal that has run into stiff opposition from the Left parties appears to be another attempt to clear some of the apprehensions.

'For the first time we got the US to appreciate that India is a nuclear weapons state, that India has the right to develop nuclear power to protect its strategic interests, and that it is a decision that must be made by the people of India not subject to any international supervision or any international interference,' Manmohan Singh added.

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