

India challenges U.S. nuclear fuel deal

by UPI

WASHINGTON - The government of India is challenging new elements of a deal it has with the United States regarding its access to nuclear fuel.

Proposed by the Bush administration last year and widely endorsed by Congress, the new deal says the United States could withdraw civil nuclear fuel supplies and equipment if India breached its unilateral moratorium on nuclear testing, a Financial Times correspondent reported from Washington. The deal also prohibits India from reprocessing spent uranium, which India is challenging, the report said.

Under the original 2005 agreement, the United States described India as a "responsible state with advanced nuclear technology," and Indian negotiators want the same reprocessing rights Washington granted to the European Union, Japan and Switzerland.

Washington is reportedly concerned of nuclear escalation in southern Asia between India and its nuclear-equipped neighbors, China and Pakistan.

The issue of reprocessing is a hot button in Washington, which is leading the international push to stop Iran's uranium enrichment program.

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