

**February 18, 2000**

**Cable, Secretary of State to the US Embassy New Delhi, 'Deputy Secretary and India's Foreign Secretary on POTUS Trip and Security Issues'**

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**Summary:**

Strobe Talbott and Lalit Mansingh discuss a possible POTUS trip to Pakistan and India.

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English

**Contents:**

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**Soltis, Marjorie A.****Heading:**STATE 30841 ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

IMMEDIATE

SUBJECT: DEPUTY SECRETARY AND INDIA'S FOREIGN SECRETARY ON POTUS TRIP AND SECURITY ISSUES

2000

CLASSIFIED BY DEPUTY SECRETARY STROBE TALBOTT, REASON 1.5(D).

RELEASE IN FULL
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1. ~~(S)~~ SUMMARY: DEPUTY SECRETARY TALBOTT HOSTED NEWLY APPOINTED FOREIGN SECRETARY MANSINGH TO LUNCH FEBRUARY 9. THEY DISCUSSED POTUS TRAVEL AND VIEWS OF PAKISTAN AND CHINA. MANSINGH CAUTIONED THAT A POTUS VISIT TO PAKISTAN MIGHT INVITE CRITICAL COMMENT IN INDIA, BUT THAT THE PRESIDENT WOULD BE RECEIVED WARMLY IN INDIA REGARDLESS, WITH AN OPPORTUNITY TO ADDRESS A JOINT SESSION OF PARLIAMENT AND SPECIAL RECEPTION. HE URGED THAT THE VISIT ACCENTUATE THE POSITIVE AND THAT MORE CONTROVERSIAL TOPICS SUCH AS NONPROLIFERATION AND PAKISTAN BE SHELVED. TALBOTT WELCOMED THE GOI'S PLANS FOR POSITIVE GESTURES DURING THE POTUS VISIT. HE NOTED THAT THE TRIP AFFORDED AN OPPORTUNITY TO EXPAND COOPERATION IN CERTAIN AREAS, BUT STRESSED THAT IT WOULD ALSO BE APPROPRIATE TO DISCUSS FRANKLY THOSE ISSUES ON WHICH WE HAVE DIFFERENCES BUT WISH

DECLASSIFIED
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TO REACH CONVERGENCE, INCLUDING NONPROLIFERATION. END SUMMARY.

2. (U) DEPUTY SECRETARY TALBOTT HOSTED NEWLY APPOINTED GOI FOREIGN SECRETARY LALITENDU MANSINGH AT LUNCH FEBRUARY 9 TO DISCUSS THE POTUS VISIT AND REGIONAL SECURITY ISSUES. MANSINGH WAS ACCOMPANIED BY JOINT SECRETARY PRASAD, AMBASSADOR CHANDRA, DCM SREENIVASAN AND GOI EMBASSY POLMIN VAZ. TALBOTT WAS JOINED BY T SENIOR ADVISOR HOLUM, SA A/S INDERFURTH, AMBASSADOR CELESTE, NSC DIRECTOR CAMP, D SPECIAL ASSISTANT CYNKIN AND SA/INS DESKOFF HAYNES (NOTETAKER).

GOI VIEW OF POTUS VISIT: A NEW MILLENNIUM

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3. ~~(S)~~ MANSINGH EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR THE DEPUTY SECRETARY'S STATESMANSHIP IN THE TALBOTT-SINGH DIALOGUES. MANSINGH SAID THAT IN HIS VERY GOOD MEETING WITH APNSA BERGER, THEY HAD DISCUSSED THE NEED TO WORK ON A VISION STATEMENT FOR THE POTUS TRIP. HE HOPED THAT THE VISION STATEMENT WOULD NOT BE A MERE COMMUNIQUE, BUT A VISION OF THE FUTURE. THIS WOULD BE THE FIRST POTUS VISIT AFTER THE END OF THE COLD WAR. THE INDO-U.S. RELATIONSHIP OF THE PAST HAD BEEN LIKE A PLANE ON THE RUNWAY AT FULL THROTTLE, READY TO TAKE OFF; PERHAPS NOW IT COULD TAKE FLIGHT. HE ALLUDED TO VISITS WHERE THINGS HAD GONE WRONG, LIKE THAT OF QUEEN ELIZABETH. IF THE FOCUS OF THE POTUS VISIT WERE ON THE FUTURE, A GLOBAL VISION, IT WOULD TURN OUT WELL. IF IT "WENT DOWN TO REGIONAL ISSUES, IT MIGHT NOT BE AS SUCCESSFUL." MANSINGH SUGGESTED THEMES SUCH AS INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY, COOPERATION ON COUNTERTERRORISM AND NARCOTICS, AND STRATEGIC FRIENDSHIP. "THE SETTING IS PERFECT: A NEW CENTURY, A NEW MILLENNIUM, THE TWO MAJOR DEMOCRACIES."

4. (U) MANSINGH NOTED THAT PARLIAMENT WOULD BE IN RECESS, BUT THAT THE PRESIDENT WOULD PROBABLY BE INVITED TO ADDRESS A JOINT SESSION CONVENED FOR HIS VISIT. THERE WOULD ALSO BE A SPECIAL RECEPTION FOR THE PRESIDENT AND HIS PARTY.

MANSINGH EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THE PRESIDENT WOULD SEE BOTH TRADITIONAL INDIA AND MODERN INDIA, NEW DELHI AND THE INDIA OUTSIDE THE CAPITOL. HE WOULD BE ABLE TO SEE HOW INDIA WAS DEALING WITH SOCIAL INEQUALITIES AND HOW ONE THIRD OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT SEATS WERE HELD BY WOMEN, PERHAPS SEE RURAL PANCHAYATS (VILLAGE COUNCILS) IN ACTION. THE VARIOUS BUSINESS ASSOCIATIONS AND BUSINESS HOUSES WERE ALSO PLANNING MAJOR PRESENTATIONS.

5. ~~(C)~~ MANSINGH SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THE ISSUE OF A POTUS VISIT TO PAKISTAN WAS "A SOVEREIGN DECISION," BUT INDIA OWED THE U.S. A "FRANK ASSESSMENT." A VISIT TO PAKISTAN AFTER THE MILITARY COUP AND WHAT INDIA HAD SUFFERED FROM TERRORISTS, WOULD ELICIT "A RESONANCE" IN INDIA. HE EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT "A VISIT WHICH COULD BECOME A BREAKTHROUGH WOULD NOT LOSE ITS LUSTER." THE PRESIDENT WOULD HELP LAUNCH THE COMMUNITY OF DEMOCRACIES IN JUNE. THAT MESSAGE WOULD BE DILUTED BY THE PICTURE OF HIS SHAKING HANDS WITH A MILITARY DICTATOR WHO, AS RECENTLY AS FEBRUARY 5, WAS TALKING OF JIHAD.

LACK OF REGIONAL ISSUES OR NONPRO WOULD BE "A MISTAKE"  
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6. ~~(C)~~ TALBOTT SAID THE U.S. CHALLENGE WAS HOW TO STRIKE A BALANCE DURING THE POTUS VISIT. HE AGREED WITH ALL OF MANSINGH'S POSITIVE SUGGESTIONS FOR THE PRESIDENTIAL TRIP. HE SAID, HOWEVER, THAT NOT TO GET INTO REGIONAL ISSUES CONCERNING INDIA AND PAKISTAN WOULD BE A "MISTAKE." IT WOULD ALSO BE APPROPRIATE TO DISCUSS FRANKLY THOSE ISSUES ON WHICH WE HAVE DIFFERENCES BUT WISH TO REACH CONVERGENCE, INCLUDING NONPROLIFERATION. TALBOTT SUGGESTED THE GOI DO MORE TO PRESENT NONPROLIFERATION ISSUES TO ITS PUBLIC.

7. ~~(C)~~ TALBOTT EMPHASIZED THAT THE USG WANTED TO PREVENT THE VERY REAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE U.S. AND INDIA FROM BEING A DRAG ON THE POTUS VISIT. WE WERE "NO LONGER ESTRANGED DEMOCRACIES." STILL, THE U.S. DID NOT WANT TO SWEEP DIFFERENCES UNDER THE RUG. THERE WERE ALSO THE PAKISTAN AND CHINA ANGLES TO CONSIDER. DURING THE VISIT, WE NEEDED TO FIND A WAY - BEHIND CLOSED DOORS OR ELSEWHERE - TO EXPLORE THESE ISSUES. TALBOTT SAID HE WAS IN NO POSITION TO SEND "SUBTLE SIGNALS" ONE WAY OR ANOTHER ABOUT A STOP IN PAKISTAN, BUT HE DID ASSURE MANSINGH THAT THE PRESIDENT AND HIS ADVISORS WOULD TAKE INTO ACCOUNT INDIAN CONCERNS. THE KEY FACTOR, HOWEVER, AS INDIA SHOULD APPRECIATE, WAS WHETHER A PRESIDENTIAL VISIT WOULD HELP STOP PAKISTAN FROM GOING FROM BAD TO WORSE. THE U.S. NEEDED TO KEEP ALIVE A CONTENT AND A QUALITY OF ENGAGEMENT WITH PAKISTAN WHICH WOULD ALLOW THE U.S. TO INFLUENCE IT, TO INDUCE PAKISTAN TO BE LESS OF A THREAT TO ITSELF AND OTHERS.

8. ~~(C)~~ MANSINGH REPLIED THAT HE HAD NO DISAGREEMENT WITH WHAT TALBOTT HAD SAID. INDIA ONLY WANTED TO UNDERLINE THE POINT THAT REGIONAL ISSUES SHOULD NOT BE "THE MAJOR POINT." HE SAID INDIA HAD CHANGED AND NOW HAD "ASPIRATIONS WHICH GO

BEYOND" THE REGIONAL. HE ASSURED TALBOTT THAT, EVEN IF THE PRESIDENT DID GO TO PAKISTAN, INDIA WOULD GIVE THE POTUS "A WARM RECEPTION."

POTUS VISIT ITINERARY AND TONE  
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9. ~~(C)~~ CAMP NOTED THAT THE NSC WAS THINKING THAT THE FIRST DAY OF THE PRESIDENT'S VISIT TO INDIA, AFTER HOLI, WOULD

INVOLVE SUBSTANTIVE MEETINGS, DIALOGUE WITH SENIOR OFFICIALS, AND AN ADDRESS TO PARLIAMENT. MANSINGH CONCURRED THAT THE GOI WAS THINKING OF ONE OR TWO DAYS OF MEETINGS IN DELHI AND THEN TRAVEL ELSEWHERE IN INDIA.

10. ~~(C)~~ Inderfurth focused on the vision statement. As Jaswant Singh had said to Secretary Albright in September, India was looking forward to a POTUS visit and to articulating a vision the two countries would have for the twenty-first century. Inderfurth referred to the Delhi Declaration of 1978 and the 1994 Clinton-Rao joint statement. The contrast between the two was striking. The 1978 document was more of a vision while the 1994 one appeared to be "a work plan." It was regrettable that the earlier vision had not been sustained. Now that the cold war had ended, it was time to forge a new vision, one that considered not only our two countries but encompassed larger and global issues, including nonproliferation. It should be something the international community would support.

11. ~~(C)~~ Inderfurth continued by saying that democracy was an important theme; indeed, the community of democracies would be a subject of a later meeting and would be a prominent part of the final year of the Clinton administration. More generally, this visit would be an opportunity to lay the foundation for a new relationship. The two countries could build on that foundation for the remainder of the president's term; there would be no "lame duck" aspect to working on our differences. There would be other high level visits. We also hoped there would be policy continuity no matter what the composition of the new administration after January 2001.

12. ~~(C)~~ Talbott added his assurance that President Clinton would put his own stamp on any statement. Mansingh mentioned that there were several inherited mechanisms which had been allowed to lapse, for instance, the agreed minutes of 1995, and there would be a question of which to

revive and which to discard or reshape. Talbott pointed out that Jaswant Singh had raised the possibility of institutionalizing the Talbott-Singh dialogue; he added that one of the challenges in the vision statement would be dealing with nonproliferation and security in a way which reflected respect for India's sovereign position but also reflected world concern. Mansingh joked that he only opposed "hypermetropia" (enlarging out of proportion) and that his concern was that the "micro not become the enemy of the macro." Mansingh underlined that India was willing to discuss everything, but that care must be taken since the vision statement would be public.

13. ~~(C)~~ Talbott commented that nonproliferation and security issues were "not micro" from the U.S. standpoint. He felt, however, that the Forsec and the U.S. side had made "similar statements with different stress." Mansingh asserted that India shared the USG's nonproliferation goals but did not want to let unfinished business appear in the vision statement.

#### OTHER ISSUES

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14. ~~(S)~~ Mansingh mentioned that when he returned to India he would be receiving his Japanese counterpart. Talbott referred to his plans to travel the next week to Tokyo and

BEIJING. WITH RESPECT TO CHINA, TALBOTT SAID THAT HIS PARTY WOULD DISCUSS THE WHOLE RANGE OF STRATEGIC POLICY. HE WAS SURE SOUTH ASIA WOULD COME UP. OTHER TOPICS WOULD INCLUDE RUSSIA, NATIONAL MISSILE DEFENSE AND THE KOREAN PENINSULA. MANSINGH POINTED OUT THAT ON APRIL 1, 2000, INDIA AND CHINA WOULD CELEBRATE THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS. PRESIDENT NARAYANAN WOULD PROBABLY TRAVEL THERE LATER. IN THE MEANTIME, INDIA WAS PURSUING AN AGENDA OF JOINT VENTURES AND CULTURAL EXCHANGE WITH CHINA. TALBOTT SAID HIS DISCUSSIONS WOULD INCLUDE DEFENSE POSTURE, AS WELL AS URGING CHINESE RESTRAINT IN DEPLOYMENT AND COOPERATION IN ACHIEVING A CUTOFF OF FISSILE MATERIAL PRODUCTION. MANSINGH SAID THAT CHINESE COOPERATION WITH PAKISTAN ON NUCLEAR DEVELOPMENT AND MISSILES WAS A CONCERN TO INDIA. INDERFURTH ADDED THAT CHINA'S LACK OF HELP IN THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT IN GENEVA WAS A U.S. CONCERN, ESPECIALLY AS IT RELATED TO A STARTUP OF FMCT NEGOTIATIONS. AFTER THE LUNCH THE DEPUTY SECRETARY INVITED THE FOREIGN SECRETARY TO JOIN HIM FOR A BRIEF PRIVATE MEETING.

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