

March 24, 1972

**State Department Cable 50634 to US Embassy
Canada, 'Indian Nuclear Intentions'**

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Summary:

Further discussions with the Canadian embassy counselor disclosed Ottawa's view that it had no evidence of Indian intentions to test a nuclear weapon or a PNE. The Indians were "leaving their options open." If they decided to test, however, it would be "impossible" for them to move forward "without revealing some indication of their intentions."

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ROUTINE OTTAWA

ROUTINE MOSCOW, IAEA VIENNA, NEW DELHI, BOMBAY, LONDON,
TOKYO

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SUBJ: INDIAN NUCLEAR INTENTIONS

REF: STATE 40378 *AE / India*

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1. SUMMARY: CANADIAN EMBASSY COUNSELOR SEYMOUR CALLED ON DI~~IR~~INDIA COUNTRY DIRECTOR SCHNEIDER MARCH 21 TO CONVEY RESPONSE TO US QUERIES RE CANADIAN VIEW OF INDIAN NUCLEAR INTENTIONS (REFTEL). SEYMOUR REPORTED CANADIANS CONSIDERED THERE WAS NO RPT NO EVIDENCE TO SUGGEST INDIA INTENDS TO PROCEED WITH EITHER NUCLEAR WEAPONS TEST OR PEACEFUL NUCLEAR EXPLOSION AT PRESENT. END SUMMARY.

2. SEYMOUR, WHO ASCERTAINED CANADIAN VIEWS DURING WEEK'S CONSULTATIONS IN OTTAWA, SAID AS RESULT US REQUEST GOC HAD COMPLETED PRELIMINARY STUDY OF TECHNICAL AND POLITICAL ASPECTS OF PROBLEM. IN REACHING ASSESSMENT THAT INDIA DID NOT INTEND PROCEED TO EXPLOSION GOC TOOK INTO CONSIDERATION INDIA-PAK WAR AND RECENT ELECTIONS. GOC CONSIDERED THESE WOULD STRENGTHEN PRIMIN'S HAND WITH QTE BOMB LOBBYISTS UNQTE WHO MAY BE IN CABINET AND LEAVE HER FREE MAKE INDEPENDENT DECISION. GOC ALSO DOUBTED INDIA WOULD EXPLODE DEVICE AT A TIME IT WAS INTERESTED IN DEVELOPING ITS RELATIONS WITH CHINA. SEYMOUR ALSO REPORTED THAT LAR~~UREN~~ GREY, HEAD OF CANADIAN ATOMIC ENERGY PROGRAM, DURING RECENT TRIP TO INDIA HAD SEEN NO EVIDENCE THAT INDIA MOVING IN DIRECTION OF NUCLEAR

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EXPLOSION.

3. IN REGARD TO OUR QUERY FOR CANADIAN VIEW ON POSSIBLE APPROACH TO SOVIETS TO USE INFLUENCE WITH INDIANS, SEYMOUR REPORTED OTTAWA CONSIDERED THIS VERY HYPOTHETICAL QUESTION. GOC WOULD WISH GIVE THIS MATTER VERY CAREFUL CONSIDERATION IF IT BECAME MORE CURRENT.

4. SEYMOUR REPORTED THAT CANADIAN PRIMIN HAD WRITTEN TO MRS. GANDHI ON OCTOBER 1, 1971 THAT IF INDIA DECIDED TO PROCEED WITH WEAPONS TEST OR PNE GOC WOULD HAVE TO REASSESS ITS PROGRAMS OF NUCLEAR ASSISTANCE FOR INDIA. SEYMOUR EXPLAINED GOC HAD SEPARATELY INFORMED GOI THAT IT MAKES NO DISTINCTION BETWEEN PNE AND WEAPONS TEST. MRS. GANDHI REPLIED ON OCTOBER 12 STATING THAT INDIA INTENDED TO ADHERE TO TERMS OF ITS AGREEMENTS WITH CANADA. PRIMIN GANDHI DID NOT HOWEVER SPEAK TO ISSUE OF HOW SHE INTERPRETED THOSE AGREEMENTS CONCERNING PNE.

5. IN CONCLUSION SYE#EYMOUR REPEATED THAT GOC HAD NO INDICATION EITHER IN TERMS OF FEASIBILITY STUDY OR PRODUCTION OF WEAPON GRADE PLATONIUM THAT INDIA PROCEEDING TOWARD NUCLEAR EXPLOSION. GOC CONSIDERS INDIANS ARE KEEPING OPTIONS OPEN. IT ALSO BELIEVES THAT ONCE INDIANS MAKE NUCLEAR DECISION IT WILL BE IMPOSSIBLE FOR THEM TO PROCEED WITHOUT REVEALING SOME INDICATION OF THEIR INTENTIONS. 44

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