

**June 23, 1972**

**State Department Cable 113523 to US Embassy  
India, 'Japanese Views Regarding Indian Nuclear  
Plans'**

**Citation:**

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**Summary:**

In response to a request from the State Department, Ryohei Murata, an official at the Japanese embassy, reported that the Japanese government believed that for prestige reasons and as a "warning" to others, the "Indians have decided to go ahead with a nuclear test" which could occur at "any time." The Thar Desert in Rajasthan would be the test site.

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PM/AE - MR. TURRENTINE

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ROUTINE NEW DELHI, TOKYO, GENEVA

ROUTINE ISLAMABAD, LONDON, OTTAWA, IAEA VIENNA, MOSCOW

LIMDIS, NOFO\*RN

*AE 1 INDIA  
XR DEF 12-1 INDIA*

SUBJ: JAPANESE VIEW REGARDING INDIAN NUCLEAR PLANS

REF: {A} TOKYO 6692  
{B} STATE 55100 - *AE 1 INDIA*

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ART *ART*

1. JAPANESE EMBASSY OFFICER {MURATA} CALLED ON INDIAN COUNTRY DIRECTOR SCHNEIDER JUNE 22 TO CONVEY RESPONSE TO DEPARTMENT'S EARLIER QUERY {REF B} FOR JAPANESE ESTIMATE OF INDIAN NUCLEAR INTENTIONS.

2. MURATA SAID HE HAD RECENTLY BEEN IN TOKYO AND HAD TAKEN OCCASION TO BRIEF HIMSELF ON JAPANESE VIEW OF INDIAN INTENTIONS. STATED JAPANESE EMBASSY IN NEW DELHI WAS ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT INFORMATION ON THIS SUBJECT, BUT UP TO NOW JAPANESE INFORMATION WAS SCANTY AND NOT CONCLUSIVE. MURATA SAID, HOWEVER, THAT ACCORDING TO INFORMATION WHICH JAPANESE HAVE INDIANS HAVE DECIDED TO GO AHEAD WITH A NUCLEAR TEST. STAGE OF INDIAN PREPARATIONS IS SUCH THAT DETONATION COULD TAKE PLACE AT ANY TIME. ALTHOUGH THERE ARE FORCES, ESSENTIALLY IN INDIAN NUCLEAR ENERGY ESTABLISHMENT, WHICH OPPOSE SUCH A TEST, IN JAPANESE VIEW MAIN ELEMENTS OF INDIAN GOVERNMENT FAVOR GOING AHEAD.

3. MURATA CONTINUED THAT GOI HAD ALREADY DECIDED UPON THAR DESERT IN RAJASTHAN AS SITE FOR TEST, WHICH PROBABLY WOULD BE IN 20 KILOTON RANGE AND MAKE USE OF PLUTONIUM.

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MURATA CITED MAY 2 STATEMENT BY DEFENSE MINISTER JAGJIVAN RAM THAT INDIANS STUDYING TECHNIQUES FOR UNDERGROUND DETONATION AS INTENTIONAL ACT PROMPTED BY PRIME MINISTER GANDHI TO LET INDIAN INTENTIONS BE KNOWN.

4. MURATA INDICATED JAPANESE ANALYSIS REGARDING THIS SUBJECT INDICATED THAT PRINCIPAL INDIAN AIM WAS NOT SCIENTIFIC BUT WAS POLITICAL, NAMELY TO ENHANCE INDIA'S PRESTIGE AND TO CONVEY WARNING TO CHINESE OR "ANYONE ELSE." JAPANESE VIEW WAS THAT SOVIET UNION WAS NOT HAPPY WITH POSSIBILITY OF INDIAN NUCLEAR EXPLOSION BECAUSE OF ITS CONCERN THAT INDIA COULD UNDERMINE NPT. NEVERTHELESS, MURATA SAID, USSR WAS NOT TRYING TO DISSUADE INDIA.

5. SHOULD INDIANS DETONATE DEVICE MURATA SAW FOLLOWING EFFECTS ON OTHER COUNTRIES:

A. CHINA WOULD NOT PROTEST BECAUSE OF ITS OWN TESTING PROGRAM.

B. DETONATION MIGHT DELAY ACTION BY JAPANESE PARLIAMENT ON NPT AS RESULT OF RIGHTIST OPPOSITION. DESPITE MAJORITY WHICH SUPPORT NPT. JAPANESE NUCLEAR POLICY WOULD NOT BE FUNDAMENTALLY AFFECTED, HOWEVER.

C. SIMILARLY GERMAN NUCLEAR POLICY WOULD BE UNAFFECTED BUT THERE WOULD BE INCREASED DEBATE.

D. IMPACT ON ISRAELI AND SOUTH AFRICAN NUCLEAR POLICY MIGHT BE GREATER THAN ON OTHER NATIONS MENTIONED.

E. COMMENT: MURATA CONVEYED ABOVE INFORMATION PRIOR RECEIPT IN DEPARTMENT OF REF A REPORTING JAPANESE PRESS SUMMARY WHICH VIRTUALLY IDENTICAL TO MURATA'S INFORMATION. SCHNEIDER QUERIED MURATA REGARDING JAPANESE SOURCE FOR REPORT THAT INDIA PLANNED TEST. MURATA REPLIED ONLY THAT INFORMATION CAME FROM TWO "INFORMANTS." ADDED THAT JAPANESE DID NOT KNOW WHETHER OR NOT INFORMANTS WERE CONVEYING CORRECT INFO. WE NOTE THAT JAPANESE FOREIGN DISARMAMENT DIVISION CHIEF {TANAKA} CITED TWO SOURCES FOR INFORMATION: MEMBER OF PAKISTANI DELEGATION TO CCD; AND MAY 2 STATEMENT OF INDIAN DEFENSE MINISTER. SINCE WE DO NOT CONSIDER PAKISTANI OFFICIAL AS UNBIASED SOURCE AND SINCE IN OUR VIEW INDIAN DEFMIN MAY 2 STATEMENT WAS NOT RPT NOT DEPARTURE FROM LONGSTANDING INDIAN NUCLEAR POLICY, WE ARE UNCERTAIN REGARDING RELIABILITY OF ESTIMATE PRESENTED BY MURATA. AS ADDRESSEES ARE AWARE DEPARTMENT PREPARED SPECIAL ESTIMATE OF THIS SITUATION

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IN MARCH 1972 AND CONCLUDED THERE WAS NO EVIDENCE OF CURRENT INDIAN INTENTION TO EXPLODE DEVICE.

7. REQUEST EMBASSY TOKYO'S EVALUATION WHETHER MURATA REPORT REPRESENTS CONSIDERED VIEW OF GOJ. 44