

April 20, 1968

Telegram from P.N. Haksar, 'Instructions to India's Representative to UN on Non-Proliferation Treaty'

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Summary:

Details on India's position toward the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

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FROM: PN HAKSAR
TO: PM
DATE: April 20 1968
TOP SECRET/IMMEDIATE

Subject: instructions to India's Representative to UN on Non-Proliferation Treaty

In defining our attitude to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, we have to apply the criteria we have been consistently applying in judging political events in terms of our own interests. During the last twenty years, we have had occasions to define our attitude on a number of occasions, e.g. the Japanese Peace Treaty, which we did not sign as it was unequal and discriminatory.

The analysis of our interests had led us to the conviction that in the world as it is constituted today, wars, and more especially nuclear wars, have ceased to be effective instruments for the pursuit of national policies. This has been amply borne out by the history of international relations during the last twenty years. We have been opposed to a division of the world in terms of ideologies, military alliances, or in terms of rich and poor nations. The non-proliferation treaty adds one more category of divisive forces in the world. We have said that these divisions bred fear and distrust, and generated tensions. In accordance with the basic belief that the piling up of arms and armaments lead to conflicts, we have vigorously and persistently contended all these twenty years that unless nations disarmed and used the resource they need for development purposes, thereby reducing the growing disparities, the world will not be a stable and a peaceful place.

Against the background of our policy stated above, if in the light of the considerations, we cannot but conclude that the NPT in its present format will not add to the sense of security in the world. We recognize that the Treaty reflects a coincidence of interest between USSR and USA. This may or may not be permanent; but even if it were, we believe that it does not represent an advance to what might be our paramount objective, namely, some tangible steps towards disarmament both nuclear and conventional. The Treaty as it stands does nothing to prevent the vertical proliferation of nuclear weapons; it would, in many ways, hamper the legitimate use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes by non-nuclear powers and it discriminates against the non-nuclear weapons powers by subjecting them to inspections and control, while exempting the others.

Moreover, we cannot forget that out of the five nuclear weapon powers, two will not be among the signatories to the Treaty. This might not be a decisive consideration but for the fact that one of the non-signatories is our neighbor, China, whose intentions towards our country are obviously hostile. China is not subject to the discipline which arises from membership of the United Nations; it accepts no generally accepted norms of international behavior, nor can it be depended on to observe the restraints needed for the maintenance of peace. It is imbued with an ideology which seeks to interfere in the affairs of other countries.

In December 1963, it was estimated that the stockpile of nuclear weapons in the United States amounted to 240,000 megatons and that of the Soviet union of some 80,000 megatons, making a total of 320,000 megatons. The Second World War was only a 6 megatons war and it was carried out for six years at a rate of 1 megaton per year. Having regard to the stockpiles which existed in 1963, and which have been further increased since then, it would be possible to compress a 6 megaton war into half a day. We are entitled to point out that the Treaty does not in any way soften these facts. By signing the Treaty we should be namely diverting attention from them and helping to create the impression that some progress was being made where there is none. Abstention from signature, on the other hand, would symbolize a protest against this state of affairs which is the real power of danger in the world. This

is not simply a matter of our keeping the so-called options open. No doubt, as a sovereign State, we have as much right to possess nuclear weapons as anybody else. However, we recognize that this is neither necessary nor desirable. At the same time, we are anxious that there should be no obstacles put in our way in developing our nuclear energy program for peaceful purposes. But above all, it is our interest, as it is our policy, to emphasize that the arms race, nuclear and conventional, must be halted first by those who are feverishly engaged in it.

Bearing these general considerations in mind, our delegation to the United Nations should participate in the discussions in the General Assembly in terms of the following instructions -

□ We should state our position in the context of the general considerations set out in paragraph 1 above. However, we should avoid a polemical tone against the nuclear powers.

. While we may comment on the special position of India vis-à-vis the Chinese nuclear threat, we should neither overplay the threat nor underplay it

. We should not mention Pakistan

. While reiterating Government's policy of using nuclear energy only for peaceful purposes, we may stress the importance from our national point of view of the utilization of nuclear energy for the economic and social development of our country.

. We should mention that our policy, as hitherto, continues to be to refrain from doing anything which would escalate the nuclear arms race.

. We should lay special emphasis on our stand on vertical proliferation

. As regards the link with disarmament, should any proposals for improving the draft Treaty gather support and are put to vote, we should vote in favor of such proposals. In explaining our vote, we should safeguard our decision not to sign the Treaty. We can do this by stating that the proposals did not go far enough (it is safe to predict that they will not), to meet our own viewpoint on the question of disarmament, on the stoppage of further production of nuclear weapons, and on the subject of cut-off of fissionable material for nuclear weapons.

. As regards peaceful nuclear explosions, if any proposals are made which are directed towards the conclusion of a separate Treaty on this subject, instructions should be sought. Instructions should also be sought if the proposal to eliminate the conclusion of bilateral arrangements in respect of peaceful explosions be pressed and find general consensus and acceptance.

. As regards the application of the safeguards, we should maintain our view that the safeguards should be uniformly applicable to all. We should, however, avoid well-known "Cold War" positions on this subject between the USA and the USSR. If any amendments are moved to the Treaty which have to effect of improving the text as regards unhampered nuclear development for peaceful purposes, instructions should be sought.

. As regards the problem of security assurances, we should emphasize the need for assurances for all non-nuclear weapon states. We should also express our objections to the linking up of assurances with the Non-Proliferation Treaty and urge its being de-linked. While avoiding criticism of the nature of the assurances, we should not propose any specific amendments to the draft resolution. Should a vote be taken on the proposed draft resolution,, we may vote in favor of operative paragraph 1, abstain on operative paragraph 2 and abstain on the resolution as a whole.

. On the question of the time-table for conclusion of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, we should not spearhead any move for delay and postponement. However, we should go along with the Afro-Asian group, should it favor such a move, taking care not to make ourselves conspicuous in this process.

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