

March 1, 1956

**Telegram, from Foreign Secretary to Indian
Embassies, 'The Question of Antarctica'**

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Summary:

India argues that atomic experiments and explosions in Antarctica may have very harmful and the international community's debate about Antarctica is appropriate.

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Transcript - English

Telegram

SECRET

NO. 124714

FROM: Foreign Secretary, New Delhi (Hussain, Superintendent CCB)

TO: Indian embassies in London, Canberra, Moscow, Paris, Washington, New York

DATE: March 1, 1956

We are informed that there is considerable feeling and some bewilderment in some countries over our request to place the item "The Question of Antarctica" on the provisional agenda of the United Nations. The countries directly interested in this question are Argentina, Chile, UK, Australia, New Zealand, Russia and the United States. You should therefore explain our position on the following lines if you are asked by the Governments concerned.

2. Although there are no populations on the Antarctica it is possible that it might become a field for international war which in atomic age would be disastrous. Even atomic experiments and explosions in this region may have very harmful results on the climate of the whole world.

3. Much constructive work in regard to meteorology and observations of cosmic rays might be possible in Antarctica. In fact UNESCO is sponsoring an international expedition to Antarctica in international geophysical year 1957-58. Meanwhile many individual countries have already organized voyages of exploration in this region. There has never been in the past an international effort of this magnitude in this area. A general debate in the UN will provide opportunities for clarification as well as for constructive work. It is not our purpose that debate should be made against any country or for the support of any rival claims, nor do we wish to censure anyone or take sides. We feel however that in the interests of peace and international development and cooperation such a debate would be helpful. For the present we are only placing item on provisional agenda. Before matter develops we shall keep in touch with and consult interested parties.

4. We have no doubt that these questions relating to Antarctica will become increasingly important in future and if matters are left to drift, without some general international guidance, they might lead to major conflicts in the future. We have thus to try to avoid any dangerous developments and have to think in terms of the atomic age which will probably govern many of these considerations.

5. You can assure the Governments concerned that our move is in no way against their interest. We are aware that there are several countries claiming sovereignty over parts of Antarctica on grounds of discovery, occupation, geographical proximity, etc. No country has hitherto argued that the whole of the continent belongs to it. Some claims are recognized by some States and not by other States.

6. Since the Government of New Zealand are, according to our information, greatly concerned about our attitude, you should ask Kasavan to explain as above to the New Zealand Government.

SIMILAR TELEGRAM SENT TO BA FOR ARGENTINA AND CHILE

SEE Telegram No. 1359 - SAME DATE, SAME INFO AS ABOVE..