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Report, Embassy of Hungary in India to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry

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Summary:

Report on India's response to the signing of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty by the United States and Soviet Union. India supportive of disarmament efforts, in part because of its concerns about China and Pakistan. Describes a speech made by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi at the Six Nation Five Continent Peace Initiative summit in January at Stockholm.

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The treaty between the Soviet Union and the USA on the elimination of shorter- and intermediate-range missiles, which was signed in last December, evoked an unequivocally positive reaction from the Indian leadership. Following its signing, the government declaration that Minister of State for External Affairs [Kunwar] Natwar Singh read to the upper house of the parliament characterized the INF treaty as an act of historical importance both in a political and a psychological sense, and emphasized that this proves the correctness of the efforts which India had made for the sake of nuclear disarmament during the previous decades. One can gather from the Indian standpoint that they regard the agreement as a bilateral treaty that is only the beginning of a global process of nuclear disarmament.

The parliamentary debate created an opportunity for the Indian government to reaffirm its earlier standpoint on refusing to join the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. The minister of state of foreign affairs repeatedly contrasted the peaceful character of India's nuclear program with China's status as a nuclear power. The Indian reactions make it clear that India's standpoint on the Non-Proliferation Treaty might be modified only in the framework of a global process of nuclear disarmament. The speech Premier Rajiv Gandhi made in late January at the summit of the "Six" [the Six-Nation Five-Continent Peace Initiative] in Stockholm confirms that India energetically strives to extend the circle of countries participating in nuclear disarmament to every power which possesses nuclear weapons, including China.

The Gandhi government has an interest in such a global process of nuclear disarmament which would be completed by a certain time and lead to the elimination of all nuclear armaments in the long run, and which would be extended to the near-nuclear states as well. The latter [aim] is motivated primarily by India's anxiety over the development of Pakistan's nuclear capacity. Although in Stockholm Gandhi did not mention Pakistan by name, he openly took a stand against the practice that near-nuclear states, "clandestinely or openly," could receive assistance from some nuclear powers. This was obviously meant to criticize the policy that the USA, and, to a lesser extent, China, pursued toward Pakistan.

The standpoint the Indian premier expressed at the summit of the "Six" confirmed that India's efforts in the field of strengthening international security and facilitating disarmament continue to be in accordance with the objectives of the socialist countries, and support the latter. For instance, Gandhi, calling for a complete and extensive nuclear disarmament, took a stand against the doctrine of "nuclear deterrence," the militarization of space, and the development of new types of weapons of mass destruction, and firmly came out in favor of signing a treaty on the complete and universal prohibition of nuclear weapons tests, and of radically reducing conventional armaments.

A remarkable element of the speech the Indian premier made in Stockholm is that Gandhi, analyzing the questions of disarmament in a broader context, called for the creation of such an effective structure of international security in which there would be no room for “outdated thinking, dangerous delusions and destructive military doctrines.” According to India's standpoint, only such an approach to international security can serve as a basis for preventing the danger of nuclear confrontation once and for all, and for making the elimination of the arms race an irreversible process. All this indicates that the content of the Delhi Declaration, which was signed during Comrade Gorbachev's visit to India in 1986, increasingly finds its way into India's practical thinking about global politics.

From the conversations we have had with the foreign policy and diplomatic circles over here, one may draw the conclusion that in comparison with their earlier summits, in Stockholm the “Six” were less able to accept such a new document of a mobilizing character that could produce a meaningful effect on the further disarmament process. This may be explained, above all, by the fact that the intensification of Soviet-American dialogue, the signing of the INF agreement, and the Soviet-American joint declaration accepted on that occasion, has hindered the “Six” in taking the initiative.

The Stockholm declaration of the “Six,” despite its positive aspects, contains few new elements. In essence, only the proposal aimed at establishing an integrated, multilateral system of inspections under the aegis of the UN belongs to the latter category. According to local sources, this initiative came from the Indian side, primarily with the aim of strengthening the multilateral character of the nuclear disarmament process and thus broadening India's opportunities to play a role in it. However, the feasibility of the proposal is quite doubtful, because in the very issue of inspections, the two Great Powers managed to find a mutually acceptable platform that has considerably contributed to the conclusion of the agreement signed in December. While the Soviet Union welcomed this initiative, it met with a categorical rejection by the United States. Presumably, the Soviet Union's positive reaction is based more on [its intention] to provide political support to the activity of the “Six” than on the acknowledgment of the feasibility of the initiative.

József Oláh
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