



December 15, 1995
Draft State Department Telegram to US Embassy Beijing,
'Possible Indian Nuclear Test'

Citation:

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Summary:

The State Department writes to Islamabad urging Pakistan to not react if in fact India chooses to launch a nuclear test. On 15 December the New York Times published a story by Tim Weiner, under the headline "US Suspects India Prepares to Conduct Nuclear Test." While some Indian journalists and policy experts were convinced that the story was a US government plant, Weiner had simply used due diligence in pursuing a lead from a non-government expert on nuclear proliferation issues. Worried that the story would exacerbate regional tensions by encouraging Pakistan to "act in a manner that jeopardizes our nonproliferation efforts in South Asia," the Department wanted to enlist the Chinese to encourage the Pakistanis to "exercise restraint in response to these reports."

Credits:

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English

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- Scan of Original Document

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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PM/RNP:LWARD:EJW
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EAP:

*Doehlin's suggestions
12/15/95*

PM:ENEWSOM
EAP/CM:DTURNBULL
T:JTIMBIE

SA/RA:MFITZPATRICK
ACDA/NP:CRUSSELL

REVIEW AUTHORITY: Archie Bolster, Senior Reviewer

IMMEDIATE BEIJING

IMMEDIATE NEW DELHI, ISLAMABAD IMMEDIATE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/15/05

TAGS: PARM, MNUC, PREL, IN

SUBJECT: POSSIBLE INDIAN NUCLEAR TEST

1. Classified by EAP. Reason 1.5(D).

2. December 15 press reports allege that India may be preparing to conduct a nuclear test. Regardless of whether India decides to take this step, these press accounts alone could exacerbate Indo-Pakistani tension. Pakistan will regard plans for an Indian nuclear test as a provocation and may well be prompted to act in a manner that jeopardizes our nonproliferation efforts in South Asia. China's reaction to these press accounts will be closely watched and could be an important ingredient in managing the resulting Pakistani problem. From our perspective, China's most useful contribution would be to urge Pakistan to exercise restraint in response to these press reports.

immediate

senior

3. Ambassador is requested to raise this issue *as promptly as possible* ~~immediately~~ with appropriate Chinese authorities drawing on the following talking points:

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-- You are no doubt aware of press reports that indicate India may be preparing to conduct a nuclear test. *explosion,*

-- The U.S. has watched with ~~some~~ concern over the last few months a debate that has been waged in India over whether to conduct a nuclear test.

-- Pressure seems to be mounting on Indian Prime Minister Rao to conduct a test.

-- The U.S. would regard with the utmost concern an Indian nuclear test and we have conveyed this view to Indian Prime Minister Rao.

-- Regardless of whether Rao decides to take this step, press accounts alone that allege India is considering a test will be regarded by Pakistan as a provocation.

-- This will exacerbate Indo-Pakistani tension and could lead to actions that make the South Asian nuclear situation deteriorate further.

-- The U.S. is urging Pakistan in the strongest terms not to react ~~rashly~~ to these reports. We urge your government to act promptly to do the same. *YY*

*in a way that
increases tensions in South Asia.*

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