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Memorandum, Hungarian Foreign Ministry

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Summary:

Memo discussing India's nuclear ambitions and position in Asia, especially in relation to China and Pakistan.

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For a long time, the Indian bourgeoisie has been striving to achieve such a status for this country that would make India's regional dominance unquestionable, and enable it to pursue its aims in the Asian continent, and in the main questions of world politics, more effectively than at present. Due to the country's limited economic potential and the political antagonisms crisscrossing the South Asian region, [India's] efforts to assert its dominance face serious obstacles even in the region that is immediately adjacent to India. In the opinion of the Indian leading circles, the power they covet can be attained through the speeded-up modernization of the army and the creation of an independent nuclear strike force. The latter would enable the country to join the ranks of the nuclear powers – as the sixth one. The Indian government considers the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which was concluded in 1968, a form of discrimination against the developing countries, and refuses to join it. Apart from the nuclear powers, India has been the only country that carried out a nuclear test (in 1974). Lately, the Indian government disregarded the joint declaration on the prevention of the further proliferation of nuclear weapons that was made at the Soviet-American summit held in Geneva in November 1985. In the 1980s, the necessity of India's nuclear armament has been discussed [in that country] with increasing intensity, with particular reference to the Pakistani threat. This has been particularly true for the period following the inauguration of the Rajiv Gandhi administration. In recent times, the prime minister himself also repeatedly made public statements in which he referred to India's option to manufacture nuclear weapons. According to the official Indian standpoint, at present the country does not possess nuclear weapons, but India is fully capable of manufacturing atomic weapons, and it is constantly developing these capabilities. In practice, it is only a question of political decisions whether India will join the ranks of the countries possessing nuclear weapons. However, it will not take this step unless “the circumstances compel the Indian government to do so.” To justify its ambition of becoming a nuclear power, the Indian government mentions Pakistan's nuclear armament as its foremost argument. In India's opinion, in the recent years Pakistan has practically developed its own nuclear weapon, which it would be able to test at any time. China is cooperating with Pakistan in this field, and the United States also fails to take actual steps against Pakistan. Thwarting the “Chinese threat” is a priority of the Indian defense doctrine. The strategic conflicts between the two countries, and their competition for hegemony over Asia, are almost of an antagonistic nature. The existence of the Chinese nuclear strike force, and the feeling of being subjected to “disarmament” – which has appeared in the wake of the Sino-Soviet rapprochement – reinforce the position of those circles who press for the manufacturing of Indian nuclear weapons. The internal pressure exerted by the rightist parties also has an effect in favor of the independent development of Indian nuclear weapons. According to the Soviet evaluation, it is practically inevitable that India will become a nuclear power sooner or later. This step might lead to numerous negative consequences: The edifice of nuclear non-proliferation will collapse, many pro-Western countries (Pakistan, Israel, South Africa) will openly take the path of nuclear armament. The danger of a local nuclear conflict will increase, and the process of nuclear disarmament, which is energetically supported by the Indian government at various international forums, will become even more complicated. Our country shares the reservations which the Soviet Union and the socialist countries have about the Indian nuclear program. Up to now, we have not published any official Hungarian declaration on this question. Budapest, August 1987