

June 27, 1972
**US Embassy Tokyo Cable 67912 to State
Department, 'Japanese View Regarding Indian
Nuclear Plans'**

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Summary:

Cable on a discussion with Japanese Disarmament Division Chief Tanaka, who was uncertain whether India would conduct the nuclear test or not.

Credits:

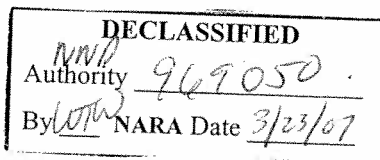
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 USMISSION IAEA VIENNA

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SUBJ: JAPANESE VIEW REGARDING INDIAN NUCLEAR PLANS

REF: A. STATE 113523; B. TOKYO 6692

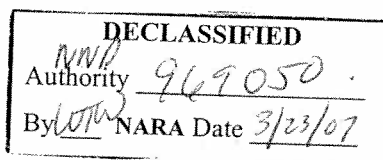
SUMMARY: FONOFF HAS NOT PREPARED MINISTRY-WIDE ASSESSMENT OF INDIAN NUCLEAR INTENTIONS. DISARMAMENT DIVISION IS UNCERTAIN WHETHER GOI WILL CONDUCT NUCLEAR TEST. END SUMMARY.

1. EMBOFF DISCUSSED INDIAN NUCLEAR INTENTIONS WITH FONOFF DISARMAMENT DIV CHIEF (TANAKA) JUNE 26 DRAWING UPON REFTL AND ASKED WHAT OTHER INFO FONOFF MIGHT HAVE ON SUBJECT. IN ADDITION TO POINTS MENTIONED REF B, TANAKA SAID FONOFF HAD ONLY TWO OTHER SIGNIFICANT BITS OF INFORMATION. FIRST IS JUDGMENT IN SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL PEACE RESEARCH INSTITUTE'S (SIPRI) DISARMAMENT YEARBOOK THAT, AMONG POTENTIAL NUCLEAR POWERS, INDIA IS COUNTRY MOST LIKELY TO CONDUCT

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TEST. SECOND IS QTE CONFIDENTIAL UNQTE (PROBABLY MEANING INTELLIGENCE) REPORT RECEIVED FROM JAPANESE EMBASSY IN NEW DELHI. TANAKA DID NOT DESCRIBE SOURCE OR SOURCES OF THIS REPORT. SOURCE HAD STATED THAT INDIAN AEC WAS OPPOSED TO AN EARLY NUCLEAR EXPLOSION BUT THAT TWO OTHER INDIAN ORGANIZATIONS IN ATOMIC ENERGY FIELD (CALLED BAHARAT DYNAMICS AND BAHARAT ELECTRONICS) FAVORED EARLY NUCLEAR EXPLOSION AND HAVE ALREADY PREPARED STUDY ON SUBJECT AND CHOSEN POSSIBLE SITE. SOURCE REPORTED THAT DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF INDIAN AEC, SHABAAID THAT TECHNICALLY INDIANS COULD DETONATE EXPLOSION WITHIN THREE TO SIX MONTHS ONCE PRIME MINISTER MADE DECISION TO DO SO.

2. TANAKA SAID THAT FOLLOWING JAPANESE PRESS STORY CONCERNING INDIAN INTENTIONS (REFTEL), JAPANESE EMBASSY NEW DELHI HAD ASKED INDIAN FONOFF WHETHER GOI INTENDED TO DETONATE UNCLEAR EXPLOSION. INDIAN FONOFF OFFICIAL REPLIED THAT HE COULD NOT ANSWER BECAUSE QTE PRIME MINISTER IS NOT AVAILABLE UNQTE AND QTE INDIAN AEC IS LOCATED IN BOMBAY UNQTE. TANAKA DID NOT READ ANY PARTICULAR SIGNIFICANCE INTO THIS EVASIVE RESPONSE. TANAKA NOTED REPORTS IN JAPANESE PRESS THAT INDIAN CCD DELEGATION HAD DENIED ASAHI STORY, BUT SAID FONOFF HAD NOT YET RECEIVED REPORT OF DENIAL FROM ITS MISSION IN GENEVA.

3. TANAKA SAID FONOFF HAD NOT PREPARED OR CLEARED ANY MINISTRY-WIDE ASSESSMENT OF INDIAN INTENTIONS. HE EXPRESSED VIEW THAT HE AND MURATA WERE USING SAME REPORTS AND COMMENTED THAT HE DID NOT BELIEVE ONE COULD BE AS CERTAIN OF INDIAN INTENTIONS AS MURATA HAD STATED. TANAKA ADDED THAT HE UNDERSTOOD IT WAS USG VIEW THAT INDIA WAS TECHNICALLY CAPABLE OF CONDUCTING TEST BUT THAT GOI HAD NOT MADE POLITICAL DECISION TO DO SO.

4. COMMENT: WHILE THERE IS NO FONOFF ASSESSMENT OF INDIAN INTENTIONS, IT IS POSSIBLE MURATA IS REFLECTING VIEWS OF A SENIOR FONOFF OFFICIAL WITH SPECIAL INTEREST IN SUBJECT (POSSIBLY VICE MINISTER HOGEN WHO PREVIOUSLY SERVED AS AMB TO INDIA). IT IS CONCEIVABLE, BUT IN EMBASSY'S VIEW IMPROBABLE, THAT MURATA HAD ACCESS TO SOME RESTRICTED INFORMATION NOT AVAILABLE TO TANAKA. TANAKA'S ACCOUNTING OF REPORT FROM JAPANESE EMBASSY NEW DELHI MAY BE HELPFUL IN ASSESSING DATA FROM WHICH JAPANESE ARE WORKING.

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