

OUTGOING TELEGRAM

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1

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AMB 01/31/86
AMB:JGD/DEAN
AMB:VJG/DEAN:LEN
DOWNS/STREEB
AMB DCM AMB/X, POL CHRON

ORIGINATOR: AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
ACTION ADDRESS: SECSTATE WASHDC, IMMEDIATE

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR

DOS REVIEWED 18-Apr-2007: DECLASSIFIED IN FULL

TAGS: PARM, US

SUBJECT: NO. 1. MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER GANDHI,
- JANUARY 30: THE GORBACHEV PROPOSAL

1. C - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. THE EVENING OF JANUARY 30, I MET FOR 50 MINUTES WITH PRIME MINISTER RAJIV GANDHI. THE ONLY OTHER PERSON IN THE ROOM WAS THE PRIME MINISTER'S DIPLOMATIC ADVISOR, AMBASSADOR GHAREKHAN. THE ATMOSPHERE WAS VERY CORDIAL. THIS MEETING REINFORCED MY OVERALL IMPRESSION THAT RAJIV GANDHI WISHES TO FIND WAYS OF WORKING WITH US, INCLUDING IN THOSE AREAS WHERE THERE MAY BE DIFFERENCES. SINCE I WAS RETURNING TO WASHINGTON ON CONSULTATION, HE ASKED ME TO CONVEY HIS SINCERE GREETINGS TO THE MANY OFFICIALS HE HAD MET IN WASHINGTON LAST JUNE. HE AGAIN EXPRESSED HIS CONDOLENCES ON THE CHALLENGER TRAGEDY. IN THIS CONNECTION, I TOLD HIM THAT WE HAD RECEIVED SO MANY MESSAGES FROM AROUND INDIA THAT I FOUND IT NECESSARY TO PUT OUT AN OFFICIAL STATEMENT FROM THE EMBASSY EXPRESSING OUR APPRECIATION FOR THE MANY SIGNS OF FRIENDSHIP INDIANS SHOWED US ON THE OCCASION OF THIS TRAGIC INCIDENT. HE LIKED THE IDEA.

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2

3. OUR CONVERSATION WAS VERY SUBSTANTIVE AND COVERED MORE THAN A DOZEN SUBJECTS. IN ORDER TO FACILITATE DISTRIBUTION IN WASHINGTON, I HAVE BROKEN DOWN THE REPORTING INTO FOURTEEN MESSAGES.

4. THIS MESSAGE DEALS WITH THE NUCLEAR TEST BAN TREATY AND THE GORBACHEV PROPOSAL.

5. REFERRING TO MY JANUARY 24 DISCUSSION WITH AMBASSADOR GHAREKHAN IN WHICH HE REQUESTED, ON BEHALF OF RAJIV GANDHI, OUR ASSESSMENT OF THE GORBACHEV PROPOSAL, I HANDED THE PRIME MINISTER A PAPER BASED ON STATE 18758. I POINTED OUT THAT THE CRUX OF THE ISSUE FROM THE US PERSPECTIVE IS THAT ARMS REDUCTION SHOULD PRECEDE CONSIDERATIONS OF A TEST BAN.

6. THE PRIME MINISTER QUICKLY LEAFED THROUGH THE PAPER I HANDED HIM AND SAID THAT THE SIX-NATION NUCLEAR INITIATIVE WOULD TAKE A POSITION ON THE GORBACHEV PROPOSAL WELL BEFORE THE NEXT REAGAN/GORBACHEV SUMMIT MEETING. IT WOULD BE MOST HELPFUL TO HIM IF THE US COULD GIVE HIM ITS INNERMOST THINKING ON THIS PROPOSAL. RAJIV SAID THAT THE INDIAN AUTHORITIES WERE VERY INTERESTED IN THE GORBACHEV PROPOSAL BUT HE, RAJIV, DOES NOT WISH TO REACT TOO HASTILY, CERTAINLY NOT WITHOUT HAVING FULLY TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT BOTH SOVIET AND AMERICAN VIEWS. ABOVE ALL, HE DID NOT WISH THE SIX-NATION NUCLEAR INITIATIVE TO MAKE IT MORE DIFFICULT FOR THE AMERICANS AND SOVIETS TO REACH AGREEMENT.

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3

7. I SAID I WOULD REPORT BACK HIS THOUGHTS ON THIS SUBJECT. I ALSO ADDED THAT IF TIME PERMITTED IT, THE VISIT BY AN AUTHORITATIVE AMERICAN--PREFERABLY FROM OUR DELEGATION IN GENEVA--TO COME TO MEET WITH TOP INDIANS TO EXPLAIN OUR POSITION, IT MIGHT BE HELPFUL. ON THE OTHER HAND, I WAS NOT SURE THIS COULD BE ARRANGED. RAJIV EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT WE WOULD BE ABLE TO SPRING SOMEBODY LOOSE FOR THAT PURPOSE.

8. RAJIV CONTINUED TO EXPOUND HIS VIEWS ON THE GORBACHEV PROPOSAL. HE SAID THAT IF THERE WERE ASPECTS WHICH WERE OBJECTIONABLE, THEN PERHAPS "QUESTIONS COMING FROM THE INDIANS" MIGHT BE MORE EFFECTIVE THAN IF SIMILAR DOUBTS WERE EXPRESSED BY THE AMERICANS. WITH A SMILE ON HIS FACE, RAJIV SAID THAT INDIANS "VOICING DOUBT" ON ANY ASPECT OF THE GORBACHEV PROPOSAL MIGHT HAVE MORE CREDIBILITY IN CERTAIN CIRCLES THAN IF THE SAME VIEWS WERE EXPRESSED BY AMERICANS.

9. SINCE WE HAD AGREED THAT I WOULD TRY TO SEE THE PRIME MINISTER AFTER MY RETURN FROM WASHINGTON, I PROMISED TO GET BACK TO HIM ON THIS SUBJECT AT THAT TIME.

DEAN##

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