

## **November 25, 1988**

### **Ciphered Telegram No. 333, Embassy of Hungary in India to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry**

#### **Citation:**

"Ciphered Telegram No. 333, Embassy of Hungary in India to the Hungarian Foreign Ministry", November 25, 1988, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Hungarian National Archives (Magyar Országos Levéltár, MOL). XIX-J-1-j India, 1988, 45. doboz, 60-103, 00756/3/1988. Obtained and translated for NPIHP by Balazs Szalontai.  
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#### **Summary:**

Report on Soviet-Indian relations based on conversations with the Indian Foreign Minister and other officials. Gorbachev's visit to India resulted in the signing of several agreements, yet there are concerns in India about the direction of Soviet foreign policy. The two countries disagree about policy towards China, Afghanistan, and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

#### **Credits:**

This document was made possible with support from Carnegie Corporation of New York (CCNY)

#### **Original Language:**

Hungarian

#### **Contents:**

Translation - English

On the basis of the 30-minute conversation I had with Foreign Minister [P.V. Narasimha] Rao, who attended the reception held to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the establishment of Hungarian-Indian diplomatic relations, and [of the information received] from the competent officials of the FM as well as from additional Indian and other sources, one should pay attention to the following aspects of the development of Soviet-Indian relations [emphasis in the original], in the context of Gorbachev's visit:

The visit reinforced the Soviet-Indian special relationship. This is indicated by the top-level discussions held in an intimate atmosphere, the signing of four agreements (nuclear reactors, credits worth 3.2 million rubles, cooperation in space research, agreement on double taxation), the joint communiqué, and the declarations which the members of the Indian government made in the parliament. Nevertheless, the Indian side is perceptibly worried about how predictable the future course of Soviet foreign policy might be, that is, they are unsure of the extent to which the Soviet Union is going to re-evaluate its earlier role in Asia [emphasis in the original], and they are under the impression that the signals they receive are not unequivocal.

During the confidential discussions (instead of the originally planned brief meeting of a protocol nature, the head of state and the premier conducted negotiations for 9 hours, Gorbachev's visit was prolonged from one day to nearly three days), the central question was the evaluation of the relationship with China [emphasis in the original]. The Soviets made it clear that they wanted to normalize their relations with China, and called upon India to do likewise.

India has no confidence that the Chinese leadership is completely absorbed in its modernization program and other domestic tasks. India feels aggrieved at any plan which would perpetuate the monopolistic position of the nuclear powers, and which would thus put India in an inferior position vis-à-vis China, too. The different [Soviet and Indian] views on China have resulted in the joint communiqué, though it mentions several international issues, does not contain any reference to China. R. Gandhi declared that Sino-Soviet and Indian-Chinese relations were not linked to each other, "they are of a [mutually] exclusive nature."

The Indian side has strong doubts about the situation in Afghanistan [emphasis in the original], they are afraid that the Soviet withdrawal might open the door to a pro-Pakistani Islamic fundamentalist regime. India is also troubled by the fact that, in their opinion, the Soviet Union is sacrificing Vietnam [emphasis in the original], and by this means it opens the door to Chinese influence in Indochina.

The differences of opinion about the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty [emphasis in the original] still persist, as India intends to leave the door open to its own "nuclear option." As a consequence, there are many different elements in the [Soviet and Indian] conceptions of disarmament, though it is still possible to [arrange] joint actions and documents.

India, together with the Soviet Union, wants to reinforce the role of the UN, but makes no secret of the fact that it does not consider the present structure of the UN [emphasis in the original] suitable for the new international realities. According to the Indian arguments, this structure reflects the circumstances which existed in the wake of World War II, and does not take into consideration of the growing importance of Japan, the FRG, India, and the Third World in general.

In the opinion of certain Indians, the Soviet "New Thinking is a dangerous mixture of selfish interests and uncertain paternalism." Gorbachev did not meet the representatives of the fraternal parties and the press.

The General Secretary of the CPSU publicly called the rumors about the cooling of Soviet-Indian relations (which were never published) "baseless speculation." The currently held, very intense parliamentary debates do not touch upon the Moscow-Delhi relationship, the parties rudely debating with each other are still in agreement on the further maintenance of close relations with the Soviet Union.