

October 31, 1964

**Cable from the Chinese Embassy in India, 'India's
Reactions to China's Nuclear Test'**

Citation:

"Cable from the Chinese Embassy in India, 'India's Reactions to China's Nuclear Test'",
October 31, 1964, Wilson Center Digital Archive, PRC FMA 113-00396-14, 194-197.
Translated by Caixia Lu. <https://wilson-center.drivingcreative.com/document/134757>

Summary:

The Chinese Embassy in India reviews various responses to China's nuclear test among Indian leaders.

Credits:

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

Original Language:

Chinese

Contents:

Translation - English

Received by the Foreign Ministry

Level: Urgent Received from the India Station
Foreign Ministry Incoming (64) Xu (69)

India's Reactions to China's Nuclear Test

To the Foreign Ministry:

India's Reactions to China's Nuclear Test:

1. The success of our nuclear explosion has given India's anti-China policy a head-on blow and sent shock waves in India. Shastri tried to get various countries to censure us, but the Asian and African countries did not go along with him. In India, he tried to make use of the issue to oppose China, but it gathered little momentum apart from a so-called "Anti Atomic Bomb Explosion Day" organized by the Delhi Congress Committee attended by only eight or so people. Given the atmosphere of confusion and despair, talk in the political sphere and public opinion have now turned to the debate on whether India should develop atomic bombs.

The government and the Indian National Congress are of the view that there is no current need for India to produce atomic bombs, and those who have openly declared their stand include Shastri, Chavan, Krishnamachari, Menon and R.K. Nehru. Apart from the rightist faction of the Indian Communist Party, the various opposition politicians advocated that India should manufacture atomic bombs. The society at large and the various newspapers have differing opinions, the debate is still ongoing. Those who were for the manufacturing of atomic bombs cited the following reasons: 1) India could show its prowess and determination to oppose China. 2) India could enhance its international reputation and reverse its declining influence in Asia and Africa. 3) India could show its independent strength and that it was not entirely dependent on the United States militarily. 4) Some of the scientists felt that manufacturing the atomic bomb would be beneficial to India's technological development. Those who opposed cited the following reasons: India's domestic problems were more dangerous than its external ones. The defense budget had already been stretched to its limit and manufacturing atomic bombs would put an unbearable strain on its economy. India would be doing the Chinese a favor if its economy were to collapse. 2) An atomic war would be world war and India had nothing to fear with American and Soviet support. Now China will not engage in an atomic war, and it is still possible for India and China to engage in a conventional war. 3) China had advanced atomic weapons and because of the geographic conditions of China and India, it would be disadvantageous for India to use atomic bombs. Making atomic bombs does not solve India's problems, and it could be subjected to a counterattack if something should happen. 4) Making atomic bombs ran counter to India's consistent stand of using nuclear power for peaceful purposes.

2. After the success of our atomic explosion, India needed to consider how it would resist our increased international influence and adopt new anti-China policies. The current issue for India is not whether it should produce atomic bombs, but whether it can do so. Considering India's own interests, if it can produce atomic bombs to resist China and enhance its international status, this is what India is actively striving for. But now the United States wants to control India and manage its relationship with Pakistan at the same time, thus it is unwilling to help India manufacture atomic bombs. The American Ambassador in India hastily said that India needs to conduct nuclear tests in the wake of our nuclear testing. Although the Soviet Union did not explicitly say anything, it was said that Kosygin dropped the same hints. Moreover, India faced a certain level of difficulty both in terms of technology and industrial foundations, and the severe economic conditions and food crisis domestically did not permit India to spend huge amounts of money conducting tests. India's strength does

not match its ambition in this aspect. In the papers, there were people who mocked the talk about manufacturing atomic bombs as whistling in the dark and making a show of bravery. Under such circumstances, the debate about whether India should manufacture atomic bombs reflects the following: 1) The Indian government is seizing the opportunity to incite anti-China feelings and wield the banner of peace to hide its own weaknesses. 2) It is using this to declare its stand to the imperialists and Soviet Union, so as to arm itself in its bid to get their aid. 3) It also goes to show that India is confused in its thinking of a policy to resist our nuclear test.

3. India took the following actions to resist the political influence of our nuclear explosion. 1) It continued to vilify us for the atomic explosion and incite anti-Chinese feelings. It castigated Premier Zhou's suggestions in his letter to the governments of various countries as hypocritical, and attempted to act in concert with the United States and Soviet Union to draw us into the disarmament conference or five power conference to prevent us from conducting nuclear tests. 2) It spared no effort to play down the significance and impact of our atomic explosion and stressed that India had favorable conditions to produce atomic bombs without difficulty. As we now had a bigger chance of regaining our place in the United Nations, India is hoping to become a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council with Soviet support. The Indian newspapers declared that great power status could not be measured by whether a country had atomic bombs or not, and that the five-power concept was a twenty-year old one, that India was also a great power even without atomic bombs. 3) It is wielding the banner of peaceful use of nuclear power on the one hand, and trying to enhance its research and preparation to manufacture atomic bombs within its current means on the other. The Indian newspapers revealed that India's vigorous push on nuclear research and development were aimed at manufacturing atomic bombs. Recently, Shastri had emphasized his opposition to using nuclear weapons in several of his speeches but did not highlight the opposition to nuclear tests. India also expressed reservations about Ceylon's suggestion for the Indian Ocean to be proclaimed as a Nuclear Weapons Free Zone. This could all be aimed at giving India some room to conduct nuclear tests henceforth.

4. The question of whether to manufacture atomic bombs has also reflected its internal conflict. The debate has yet to conclude. The opposition parties will use this issue to attack the government. It is rumored that those in the Indian National Congress are also not completely united on this issue. It is expected that the opposition parties and the government will still argue about this at the next parliament session.

Chinese Embassy in India
31 October 1964