

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15
CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06
PRS-01 /065 W
-----087221 061947Z /43

R 061500Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6394
INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY
AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
AMEMBASSY DACCA
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY KABUL
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 0246

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: XD, UR, US
SUBJECT: SOVIET MFA OFFICIAL DISCUSSES INDIA

REF: (A) MOSCOW 0060, (B) NEW DELHI 18097

SUMMARY: SOVIET MFA INDIAN SPECIALIST IS OPTIMISTIC ABOUT FUTURE COURSE OF INDO-SOVIET RELATIONS. HE EXPRESSED HOPE AND EXPECTATION THAT PRESENT "AGGRAVATIONS" IN DOMESTIC INDIAN POLITICS WILL ASSIST "PROGRESSIVE" FORCES TO RETURN TO POWER. END SUMMARY.

1. DURING JAN 3 CALL AT SOVIET FOREIGN MINISTRY, EMBOFF DISCUSSED INDIAN FOREIGN POLICY AND THE INDIAN DOMESTIC POLITICAL SCENE WITH DEPUTY CHIEF, SOUTH ASIAN DEPARTMENT, AND FORMER SOVIET MINISTER-COUNSELOR IN NEW DELHI, V.K. BOLDYREV. BOLDYREV'S COMMENTS
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ON INDO-U.S. RELATIONS AND THE PRESIDENT'S VISIT TO INDIA WERE REPORTED REF A.

2. INDIAN FOREIGN POLICY: BOLDYREV STATED THAT GROMYKO'S VISIT TO INDIA AND DESAI'S VISIT TO THE USSR IN 1977 STRENGTHENED INDO-SOVIET RELATIONS. HE EXPRESSED OPTIMISM ABOUT FUTURE IMPROVEMENT IN

INDO-SOVIET RELATIONS WHILE OBSERVING THAT MOSCOW AND DELHI'S VIEWS ON MANY INTERNATIONAL ISSUES COINCIDE, FOR EXAMPLE ON NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS AMONG THE NATIONS OF SOUTH ASIA AND OPPOSITION TO THE U.S. BASE AT DIEGO GARCIA. BOLDYREV REQUESTED EMBASSY'S VIEWS ON FUTURE OF SINO-INDIAN RELATIONS BUT DECLINED COMMENT ON THIS TOPIC HIMSELF.

3. INTERNAL INDIAN POLITICS: BOLDYREV SAID THAT EVEN SHORT TERM PREDICTIONS ON DEVELOPMENTS IN INDIAN DOMESTIC POLITICS ARE IMPOSSIBLE TO MAKE. THE SPLIT IN THE CONGRESS PARTY WILL HELP THE JANATA FRONT IN THE SHORT RUN. HOWEVER, THE FUTURE IS WITH THE "PROGRESSIVE" FORCES. "PROGRESSIVE" ELEMENTS RESIDE IN THE JANATA FRONT, THE TWO CONGRESS PARTIES AND THE COMMUNIST PARTIES. THE "AGGRAVATION" OF POLITICAL STRUGGLE WITHIN THE JANATA FRONT AND THE TWO CONGRESSES THAT IS NOW UNDERWAY WILL SERVE TO UNITE THE "PROGRESSIVES" BY BREAKING DOWN THE SUPERFICIAL DIFFERENCES THAT DIVIDE THEM. WHEN ASKED, BOLDYREV DESCRIBED MRS. GANDHI AS A "PROGRESSIVE". HE CLAIMED THAT BOTH THE CPI AND CPM ARE "COMMUNIST" PARTIES AND EVENTUAL COOPERATION BETWEEN THEM SHOULD NOT BE RULED OUT. SIGNIFICANTLY, A GENERAL "POLITICAL AWARENESS" AMONG INDIANS IS GROWING. SO IS THE DEGREE OF INFLUENCE
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OF IMPORTANT GROUPS IN INDIAN SOCIETY, SUCH AS LABOR UNIONS, PEASANT ORGANIZATIONS, PUBLIC SECTOR INTEREST GROUPS, AND PROGRESSIVE-MINDED ELEMENTS AMONG THE "BOURGEOISE".

4. COMMENT: IT IS OF COURSE IMPOSSIBLE TO DETERMINE HOW MUCH REAL SIGNIFICANCE BOLDYREV ATTACHES TO HIS MARXIST FRAMEWORK AS APPLIED TO INDIAN SOCIETY AND POLITICS. WE WOULD GUESS NOT MUCH, GIVEN HIS LONG EXPERIENCE IN DIA. WHAT WE VIEW AS SIGNIFICANT IS HIS OPENLY EXPRESSED HOPE AND EXPECTATION THAT THE INDIAN POLITICAL SCENE WILL TAKE A MORE FAVORABLE TURN (FROM SOVIET VIEW) AND THAT "PROGRESSIVE" FORCES WILL AGAIN COALESCE AS SOVIETS INTERPRET THEY DID UNDER MRS. GANDHI.

5. FOR NEW DELHI: WE WELCOMED YOUR RECENT UPDATE (REF B) ON INTERNAL INDIAN POLITICS AND WOULD APPRECIATE BEING ON DISTRIBUTION FOR YOUR FUTURE WRAPUPS ON THIS TOPIC.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 06 jan 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978MOSCOW00246
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780011-0032
Format: TEL
From: MOSCOW
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780192/aaaaczsz.tel
Line Count: 114
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 409501e6-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 MOSCOW 60, 78 NEW DELHI 18097
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3818293
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SOVIET MFA OFFICIAL DISCUSSES INDIA
TAGS: PGOV, XD, UR, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/409501e6-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014