

WITH THE COMPLIMENTS OF THE B.B.C.
EXTRACTS MAY BE QUOTED FROM THIS BROADCAST
THE AUTHOR'S PERMISSION IS NECESSARY FOR
COMPLETE OR SUBSTANTIAL REPRODUCTION. THE
B.B.C.'S PERMISSION ALSO IS REQUIRED FOR SUCH
REPRODUCTION WITHIN 28 DAYS OF THE BROADCAST.

Revoluta
34

WTP

WT3 1452 12/05/80

LINES : T=212 P=30

1453

=INDIA (CORRECTED VERSION OF WH2)=
OR/41/M162/G

THE WORLD TODAY

Duration: 13'42"
Pre-rec: 9.5.80

PRODUCER: Alan Le Breton
831 CB BUSH. PABX: 2771/2032
Direction: H.T.F.(W.S.)

Speakers: Peter Lyon
Inda Malhotra
Romesh Tharpar

Interviewer: Alan Le Breton
Narrator: Michael Ashbee

First World Service: Friday, 9th May, 1980

SIG. TUNE:

NARRATOR:

KSE 083 1	
RECEIVED 20.61	
20 MAY 1980	
DESK OFF	
INCLX	5036

The decision by the American State Department to supply India with enriched uranium for its nuclear power programme comes at a time when tension in South Asia is still running high - as a result of the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. With Mrs. Gandhi's return to power at the beginning of this year, India's relations with Moscow have remained friendly. So, could America's decision to supply India's much needed fuel, be taken as an attempt to redress the balance in its favour? Alan Le Breton put that question to Peter Lyon of the Commonwealth Institute, a specialist in the affairs of the Indian sub-continent.

LYON:

I think generally speaking, Indian/American relations have had a lot of vexations and surface tensions. They probably in substance haven't altered a great deal over the last 10 years or so. But one of the sticking points had been this issue about nuclear fuel and whether the United States would continue to supply fuel to the Tarapur plant and since the Indian nuclear explosion in 1974, which the Indians insisted was a peaceful explosion, that issue has been rather fraught in Indian/American relations. The announcement that President Carter is changing American policy on that, does seem to suggest some desire on the American part, certainly on the Administration's part, to improve relations with India quite strongly if possible.

LE BRETON:

02-

WT3 1452 12/05/80

LINES : T=212 P=34

If the United States were to go ahead and supply nuclear fuel to India, this would add another de-stabilizing influence in the region wouldn't it? Particularly in view of the fact that Pakistan is believed to have nuclear potential as well?

LYON:

Yes, of course, there is a great deal of ambiguous talk coming out of India and out of Pakistan, about their nuclear ambitions. Both countries deny that they have a nuclear weapons programme in being. Mrs. Gandhi's predecessor Moraji Dessari's government and the caretaker government thereafter, accepted at face value, apparently, the assurances of Zia Ul Hak that it wasn't a weapons related programme, it was for energy and for peaceful purposes, which is exactly what the Indians themselves have said. But, there is no doubt that many observers think that there is real prospect in the 80's an awesome prospect of a nuclear arms race between India and Pakistan. And any easing of the way for India to develop its nuclear programme, will be regarded very apprehensively in Pakistan and probably in a number of other near-by countries as well.

LE BRETON:

But how important is the nuclear issue? The fact that the United States might be prepared to supply India with fuel: that isn't going to make Mrs. Gandhi change her mind over things like her attitude to the Soviet position in Afghanistan, for instance?

LYON:

No, I think the announced reason from the White House that the American Administration has changed its mind because of events in Afghanistan, seems to me to be disproportionate or bear no obvious relation to the Afghanistan issue. If, Mr. Carter's calculation is that he will, therefore, purchase a greater influence on Indian policy, make it much more aligned with American policy, I think that's very unlikely to occur. Indian assessments of the Afghanistan issue are not going to be fundamentally influenced one way or another by what American policy is on the nuclear issue. And

Indians will take the view that their own position the nuclear issue has been consistent and legal throughout, and if the American's change their minds they would welcome it, but the assessment of the Afghanistan issue is another matter altogether.

NARRATOR: