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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

SUMMARY NOTES OF 558th NSC MEETING
June 9, 1966

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By 48 NARA, Date 7-16-90

The Problem of Indian Nuclear Weapons

The President: indicated that this was the first of a series of NSC meetings to be devoted to the discussion of complex problems requiring careful exploration before they were to come to him for decision. He expressed his concern about the growing pressures in India favoring the nuclear route. Its own economic progress and the stability of the whole area depended on India not going nuclear. The Paper admirably summarized the problems. He invited Mr. Ball to lay out the issues.

Mr. Ball: briefly summarized the Interdepartmental paper of June 7, 1966, on this subject, giving the pros and cons of the suggested alternatives (Plowshare was not mentioned). Although his presentation was even-handed, he appeared to favor some form of multilateral approach which attempted to deal with India's real security problems.

He recommended further--and urgent--staff studies.

Mr. McNamara: agreed and thought recommendations could come forward for Presidential consideration within two to three weeks.

Mr. Foster: Stressed the urgency, since disarmament meetings resume in Geneva in June, and the U. S. must have an improved position within a month or six weeks at the outside. He thought the two or three principal alternatives now under study (in the Committee of Principals) could easily be staffed out and recommended within a month.

Mr. Marks: Urged (a) a conference of world intellectuals to stress the economic costs and security liabilities of nuclear weapons; (b) using the 20th anniversary of the Baruch proposals as the occasion for a bold new U. S. initiative.

The Vice President: Stressed how little additional expenditure would be necessary beyond that already invested for India to go nuclear. He preferred a UN umbrella with private U. S. reassurances to India. This leaves the door open to the Soviets without forcing either the Indians or Russia to take a public stand.

Ambassador Goldberg: Stressed the urgency of deciding on any such arrangement, since it would require soundings with the Russians well in advance of the opening of the UNGA in September. Also necessary would be precise commitments to the Indians.

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Mr. Foster: Cited Minister Banerjee, the Indian Minister who had officially indicated that "for a period, a General Assembly resolution would be adequate."

Mr. Rostow: Urged:

a. the urgency of our own explorations but reminded the Council of the complexity of decisions countries must face before they chose to go nuclear. Our problem was to buy time until the Indians came to accept the necessity for Western assistance;

b. the nuclear issue was so complex that it could not be dealt with solely by the specialists concentrating on arms control or by the country or area specialists. We must find ways of combining these two types of specialists in the study of this problem.

The President: Instructed the Department to speed the study of the Indian nuclear problem and said he would issue a NSAM shortly.

Howard Wriggins

ATTENDEES FOR 558th NSC MEETING

June 9, 1966, 12:00 Noon

The Vice President

Acting Secretary of State George Ball
Deputy Under Secretary U. Alexis Johnson
UN Representative Arthur J. Goldberg

Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara
Assistant Secretary of Defense John McNaughton

Treasury Secretary Henry Fowler

ACDA Director William C. Foster

AEC Commissioner John Palfrey

AID Administrator David E. Bell

CIA Director Admiral Raborn

JCS Chairman General Earle Wheeler

OEP Director Farris Bryant

USIA Director Leonard Marks

Walt Rostow
Robert Kintner
Donald Hornig
Bromley Smith
Francis Bator
Howard Wriggins
George Christian

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