THE 18 MAY 1974 INDIAN NUCLEAR TEST

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

On 18 May 1974 India successfully detonated a nuclear device underground in the Rajasthan Desert. The device itself was entirely an Indian effort with the plutonium being produced in the Canadian-supplied CIRUS reactor from Indian uranium and recovered in India's own fuel reprocessing plant at Trombay. The Indians, as expected, announced the test as being for peaceful purposes.

DISCUSSION
Mrs. Gandhi's program to develop a nuclear device was a well-kept secret, and the test took the world by surprise on 18 May 1974. Within hours after the test, which took place underground at 0605 hours New Delhi time, a news conference was held by Dr. Sethna who announced that India had carried out an underground nuclear explosion for peaceful purposes in western India. He said the plutonium implosion device was set off at a depth of over 100 meters but was fully contained and no radioactivity was vented.

The nuclear device used plutonium as the fuel material. The plutonium used had been produced in the CHROS.
reactor at Trombay and was recovered in the fuel reprocessing plant located there.

The reactor was supplied by Canada with the understanding that it would be used only for peaceful purposes. The Indians take the position that this agreement was upheld because the device tested was for peaceful purposes. The Canadians however have maintained that the use of plutonium produced in the CIRUS reactor for any explosion, peaceful or otherwise, would be a violation of this agreement.
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