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HANDLING INDICATOR

TO : Department of State

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INFO : BOMBAY, CALCUTTA, GENEVA, LONDON, MADRAS, MOSCOW, OTTAWA

FROM : Amembassy NEW DELHI

DATE: December 12, 1967

SUBJECT : Canadians Warn GOI on NPT

REF : New Delhi A-503, December 1, 1967

DISTO

Acting on instructions from Ottawa, the new Canadian High Commissioner, Mr. James GEORGE, has warned Prime Minister Gandhi and Foreign Secretary DAYAL of the adverse effects GOI non-accession to the NPT may have on the Canadian public, Canada's bilateral aid program to India, and future Canadian-GOI collaboration in the nuclear field. A senior officer of the High Commission has made a similar presentation to MEA Joint Secretary R. JAIPAL.

### Background

According to our source about a month ago senior officers in the High Commission prevailed on Mr. George to recommend to Ottawa that he be authorized as soon as possible to forewarn the Prime Minister of the damage to Indo-Canadian relations an Indian refusal to sign the NPT would invite. In the viewpoint of these officers GOI attitudes on NPT have considerably hardened in the last two or three months. While it was felt no irrevocable policy decision on NPT had been made yet by the GOI, it was concluded that time was

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rapidly running out for Canada to play the particular hand of cards it holds in India. The new High Commissioner agreed to this assessment. And so did Ottawa.

#### Meeting with Mrs. Gandhi

The High Commissioner arranged a meeting with Mrs. Gandhi early last week. He is reported to have said the Canadian Government viewed with increasing alarm reports from Geneva, New Delhi and New York concerning India's growing intransigency on the subject of NPT. He stated that in the past months Canada has made every effort with the GOI to discuss rationally and realistically the GOI's various reservations concerning NPT. At no time during these discussions had the Canadian Government brought to bear any direct or implied pressure intended to force India to accede to the treaty. However, the time had now come to think about some of the repercussions in Canada, and their effects on Indo-Canadian relations, should India not sign.

The High Commissioner reportedly went on to say the primary consideration was the highly negative impact such an Indian decision would have on the Canadian Parliament and public. It was unnecessary for him to review the history and dimensions of the special relationship existing between the two countries. He left it to Mrs. Gandhi to imagine the effect in Canada if one of its closest friends, who had benefited more from its generosity than any other nation, were to pursue an opposing course on an issue of such fundamental world importance. Mrs. Gandhi should know Canada was irrevocably committed to the need for a non-proliferation treaty. This was a sine qua non of Canadian foreign policy. Should India decide not to sign the treaty, Mrs. Gandhi should be under no illusions that the Canadian Parliament probably would promptly demand a review of Canada's economic aid program to India and her cooperative nuclear program. (Our informant says the High Commissioner was instructed not to elaborate on either of these points).

#### Mrs. Gandhi's Reaction

Mrs. Gandhi reportedly replied she was fully aware of the implications non-accession held for India. But did the Great Powers, including Canada, really understand her dilemma? With China at her back, and Pakistan lurking on the sidelines, she foresaw no alternative but to keep open her

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option on the production of nuclear weapons. She emphasized the policy of the Government of India remained one of devoting its nuclear resources solely to peaceful uses. But who could foresee when it might become necessary to change this policy? Besides, she is reported to have said, what significance would security assurances under the treaty hold for India? "If the Americans want to come to our aid against an attack by the Chinese they will, even if we don't sign the NPT. And if they don't want to come to our aid, they won't even if we do sign the treaty."

#### Meeting with Foreign Secretary Dayal

The High Commissioner followed up his presentation to Mrs. Gandhi with a discussion with the Foreign Secretary. Our informant characterized Dayal's reaction to the High Commissioner's approach as "shocking." Dayal reportedly said India would never give up an iota of its hard-fought independence by signing the NPT. India's political leaders held in sacred patrimony the freedom of future generations. Accession to NPT would constitute an infringement of national sovereignty. The GOI was aware of the potential threat of withdrawal of aid by the Americans, Russians, British and Canadians if India did not sign the treaty. Let everyone stop their aid. India would survive. The important thing was to protect the nation's freedom and independence from foreign domination, whatever the source and whatever the guise.

#### Meeting with MEA Joint Secretary Jaipal

Because the Canadians' primary working level contact in MEA on the subject of NPT has been R. Jaipal, a senior High Commission officer reviewed the state of play with him last Friday. Jaipal reportedly listened soberly to the presentation. At the conclusion he is said to have wryly remarked, "Am I to assume the Americans will be in to see me on Monday and the Russians immediately after them?" After a few other cursory remarks, he concluded by asking why the Canadian was telling him all this. The Canadian asked what he meant by that statement. Jaipal reportedly retorted, "Go see Sarabhai (AEC Chairman). He's the man you should be working on."

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Comment

Jaipal's implied suggestion that Dr. Sarabhai is one of the primary architect's of the GOI's position on NPT confirms our own assessment. A nationalist first and scientist second, Sarabhai's influence on Mrs. Gandhi appears to be on the ascendancy. He comes to Delhi at least once a week to see her, and reportedly talks with her by telephone one or more times daily.

One of Sarabhai's main weaknesses is his vanity. We wonder if it might be worthwhile inviting him during his next trip abroad to stop in Geneva (and perhaps Washington) for the "full treatment" by Ambassador Foster and his associates. Conceivably his emotional and somewhat irrational position on NPT might be modified by such an exposure.

Action Requested: We would appreciate Geneva's and Washington's reactions to the foregoing proposal to extend an invitation to Dr. Sarabhai.

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