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Subject: ROUTINE: AMBASSADOR S MEETING WITH OPPOSITION LEADER

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REVIEW AUTHORITY: Archie Bolster, Senior Reviewer

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TAGS: PREL, ECON, ENRG, <<IN>>, US
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S MEETING WITH OPPOSITION LEADER
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VAJPAYEE: CTBT AND TESTING

1. CLASSIFIED CONFIDENTIAL BY AMBASSADOR WISNER.
REASON: 1.5 D.

SUMMARY

2. (C) CALLING ON LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION IN THE LOK SABHA AND FORMER BHARATIYA JANATA PARTY PRIME MINISTER ATAL BEHARI VAYPAYEE AUGUST 8, THE AMBASSADOR MADE ANOTHER EFFORT TO PERSUADE VAJPAYEE THAT INDIA SHOULD NOT BLOCK THE CTBT IN THE CD. THE BREVITY OF VAJPAYEE'S RESPONSES AND HIS BODY LANGUAGE LEFT LITTLE ROOM FOR ENCOURAGEMENT ON CTBT AND INDICATED AN INCLINATION TO FAVOR AN INDIAN <<NUCLEAR>> TEST. (OTHER TOPICS DISCUSSED REPORTEED SEPTTEL.) END SUMMARY.

3. (C) THE AMBASSADOR NOTED THAT THE SECRETARY TOLD INDIAN FOREIGN MINISTER GUJRAL IN JAKARTA THAT THE U.S. CAN ACCEPT THAT INDIA DOES NOT LIKE THE CTBT TEXT AND THE SECURITY ASPECTS OF INDIA'S CONCERNS BUT BELIEVES THAT INDIA SHOULD LET OTHER COUNTRIES TAKE THE TREATY TO THEIR CAPITALS AND SHOULD THEREFORE LET THE CD TRANSMIT THE TREATY TO NEW YORK. THE SECRETARY HAD ALSO OBSERVED THAT INDIA IS FREE TO STATE, FORMALLY, IN WRITING, FOR THE RECORD, THAT IT DOES NOT LIKE THE TREATY AND DOES NOT INTEND TO BE A PARTY TO IT. THIS LANGUAGE COULD BE INSERTED INTO THE CD'S REPORT TO THE UNGA ON THE TREATY, MAKING IT CLEAR THAT INDIA IS NOT PREPARED TO ACCEPT CTBT.

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4. (C) THE AMBASSADOR ADDED THAT, SINCE THAT TIME, SOME INDIANS HAD ARGUED THAT, IF INDIA DOES NOT ACCEPT THE TREATY, IT WILL BE SUBJECT TO SANCTIONS AND OTHER PENALTIES UNDER SECTION XIV OF THE TREATY. THE AMBASSADOR SAID HE COULD TELL VAJPAYEE WITH ABSOLUTE AUTHORITY THAT THIS INTERPRETATION IS INACCURATE. INDIA WILL NOT BE SUBJECT TO SANCTIONS OR OTHER DISCRIMINATORY BEHAVIOR. THE U.S. DOES NOT READ THE TREATY THIS WAY AND WILL NOT LET THIS HAPPEN. THE U.S. IS PREPARED TO EXCHANGE NOTES TO THIS EFFECT AND IS SO INFORMING THE FOREIGN MINISTER.

5. (C) CONCLUDING, THE AMBASSADOR NOTED THAT THE U.S. AND CHINA HAD COME TO AGREEMENT ON THE CTBT AND THIS MEANS THAT PAKISTAN WILL PROBABLY SUPPORT THE TEXT. HE SAID HE DID NOT WANT TO SEE INDIA STAND ALL ALONE. INDIA CAN STAND ASIDE AND LET THE TREATY GO FORWARD. IT WOULD BE MOST UNFORTUNATE IF IT WERE THE ONLY COUNTRY TO BLOCK A TREATY THE REST OF THE WORLD REGARDS AS IMPORTANT.

6. (C) IN RESPONSE, VAJPAYEE ASKED IN SO MANY WORDS, "WHAT ABOUT ENTRY INTO FORCE?" THE AMBASSADOR REPLIED THAT THIS WAS THE POINT OF WHAT THE U.S. WAS SAYING WITH REGARD TO SECTION XIV: IF INDIA DOES NOT SIGN, THERE WOULD BE ANOTHER DISCUSSION OF HOW TO PROCEED WITH ENTRY INTO FORCE IN THREE YEARS AT THE REVIEW CONFERENCE. THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT THERE WOULD BE PENALTIES AGAINST INDIA FOR NOT SIGNING.

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PAGE 04 STATE 167301 122302Z 7. (C) VAJPAYEE THEN ASKED, "WHAT IF WE START UNDERGROUND TESTS?" THE AMBASSADOR RESPONDED THAT HE WOULD BE THE FIRST TO URGE INDIA NOT TO TEST FOR SEVERAL GOOD REASONS: FIRST, A SINGLE TEST WOULD BE OF NO ADVANTAGE TO INDIA OR WOULD START THE COUNTRY DOWN A LONG AND EXPENSIVE PATH WHICH WILL INCREASE THREATS TO INDIA -- NOT ELIMINATE THEM. SECOND, IT WOULD BRING UPON INDIA THE EFFECTS OF SEVERAL U.S. LAWS PASSED YEARS AGO AND HAVING NOTHING TO DO WITH CTBT. THESE LAWS WOULD SEVERELY IMPEDE THE FLOW OF INVESTMENT, TECHNOLOGY AND ASSISTANCE WHICH INDIA REQUIRES. THIRD, A TEST WOULD CREATE A MAJOR INTERNATIONAL OUTCRY AGAINST INDIA, HAVING AN IMMEDIATE AND EMOTIONAL IMPACT ON PEOPLES, NOT JUST GOVERNMENTS, THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. AFTER A MOMENT'S SILENCE, VAJPAYEE TURNED THE CONVERSATION TO ANOTHER SUBJECT.

8. (C) COMMENT: VAJPAYEE SAID LITTLE ON THESE SUBJECTS BUT HIS BODY LANGUAGE AND AN OPENING QUIP ABOUT NOT "BLOCKING" THE AMBASSADOR'S TAKING HIS SEAT (IMPLICITLY RESERVING THE RIGHT TO "BLOCK" OTHER THINGS) LEFT LITTLE REASON FOR OPTIMISM REGARDING HIS POSITION ON CTBT. FURTHER, WE INTERPRET HIS QUESTION ABOUT TESTING AS INDICATING THAT VAJPAYEE AND THE BJP WOULD FAVOR A TEST. WE MUST CONCLUDE THAT VAJPAYEE, LIKE OTHER INDIAN INTERLOCUTORS, IS SIMPLY NOT PREPARED TO BE PERSUADED BY REASON ON THESE MATTERS.

WISNER UNQUOTE TARNOFF

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