
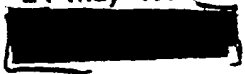


Weekly Summary

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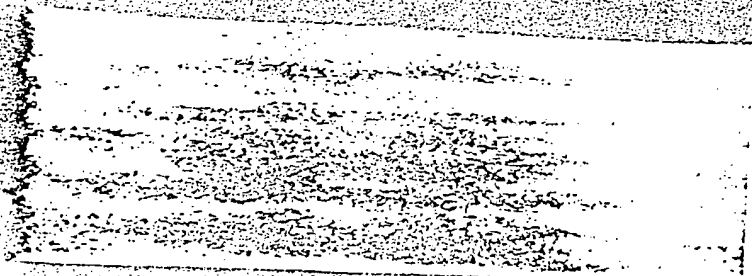

24 May 1974


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CONTENTS (May 24, 1974)



The Indian Nuclear Test



The Indian Nuclear Test

India became the world's sixth nuclear power on May 18, when it detonated an underground nuclear device. The event occurred in the western part of the Great Indian Desert in Rajasthan, less than 50 miles from India's border with Pakistan.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

According to the chairman of India's Atomic Energy Commission, Dr. H.N. Sethna, the "implosion" device was developed entirely by India, and all components, including the plutonium, were produced locally.

Indian officials told reporters that the device was buried at a depth of slightly more than 100 meters, and was fully contained.

[REDACTED]

Indian officials were quoted as saying that the purpose of the test was to develop atomic devices for peaceful uses, such as in mining, canal construction, and the deepening and widening of ports. Although the New Delhi press has reported that a series of nuclear explosions will be carried out, Dr. Sethna was noncommittal when asked if



Indian AEC Chairman Sethna and PM Gandhi
Announcing the test

any more tests were planned. Addressing a news conference in Bombay last Monday, he said it would take six months to process the data collected from the May 18 test.

The nuclear materials for the test almost certainly came from the Canadian-built CIRUS research reactor at the Bhabha Atomic Research Center at Trombay. For a number of years, the Indians have been producing weapons-grade plutonium from the irradiated fuel used to power the reactor. This work has been done at an Indian-built chemical separation plant also located at Trombay.

The CIRUS reactor has been in full operation since 1963.

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

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The only reactor safeguard agreed to by New Delhi was a written statement to the Canadians that the reactor and its products would be used only for peaceful purposes. Canada has long held that any explosion would be a violation of this agreement, but India has never accepted this interpretation.

New Delhi continues to deny any intention of producing nuclear weapons, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Pressures on the Gandhi government to develop a military capability almost certainly will be great. India's Air Force reportedly has already been testing the capability of its British-built Canberra bombers to carry loads of up to 8,000 pounds. [REDACTED]

With its limited range, however, the Canberra would be a strategic threat only to Pakistan.

Development of long-range delivery systems for nuclear weapons would be a difficult and expensive problem for India because it does not have either bombers or missiles suitable for reaching distant targets. India's modest space program has concentrated on the development of sounding rockets and, based on its present level of technology, India probably could not develop an intermediate-range missile within the next ten years without substantial outside help.

THE POLITICAL FALLOUT

India

Initial reaction in India has been euphoric. Except for predictable criticism from one communist faction, the event has evoked widespread enthusiasm. This enthusiasm, however, is likely to dissipate before long because of the hardships imposed by growing inflation and food shortages. India's economic problems may even get worse if, because of the test, the country runs into trouble securing new help from abroad. New Delhi hopes to receive more than \$1 billion in aid this year to

help meet the soaring costs of imported petroleum, grain, and fertilizer. The Indians will probably also ask for rescheduling of existing debts.

Pakistan

The slow movement in recent months toward improved Indo-Pakistani relations may be interrupted as a result of the test. Prospects for an early resumption of trade and diplomatic relations are poorer than they were. Islamabad has said it will ask the permanent members of the UN Security Council to provide Pakistan with a "nuclear umbrella," but the Pakistanis are likely to concentrate on getting support and reassurance from China and the US. While the Pakistanis will probably not go so far as to seek a formal defense treaty with China, they will certainly press Peking to reiterate as strongly as possible China's support of Pakistan's territorial integrity. Prime Minister Bhutto no doubt would like the CENTO countries to issue a joint condemnation of the Indian test, but his government will not place much reliance on CENTO itself to protect Pakistan's security.

