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THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

JCSM-1-67

- 4 JAN 1967

## MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Subject: The Indian Nuclear Weapons Problem;  
Security Aspects (U)

1. (U) Reference is made to a memorandum by the Assistant Secretary of Defense (International Security Affairs), I-28859/66, dated 29 December 1966, subject as above, requesting the views of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on the conclusions of a report prepared in the Department of State in response to National Security Action Memorandum No. 355: The Indian Nuclear Weapons Problem.

2. (S) In preparing their views, the Joint Chiefs of Staff have reviewed related previous considerations as expressed in JCSM-80-66, dated 4 February 1966, subject: "Memorandum for the President on Assurances to India (U)," and the memorandums cited in paragraph 2 of that document. In these documents, the Joint Chiefs of Staff expressed the view that the guiding factors in whether a nonnuclear power seeks nuclear status will be its own real or imagined self-interest measured against its capabilities, and that US efforts would probably have little value in influencing a final decision. They also made the following recommendations, still considered valid:

- a. That no nuclear assurances be extended to India beyond those made by the President in 1964.
- b. That no action be taken in regard to India which could alienate US allies, especially Pakistan.
- c. That the United States avoid creating any impression that it is willing to broaden its commitments to India.
- d. That the United States retain maximum flexibility for future US action in response to CHICOM nuclear attack or blackmail.

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3. (S) The Joint Chiefs of Staff agree with the conclusions in paragraphs 1 through 4 in Part I of the subject report. The usefulness of the private approach advocated in conclusion 5 is believed limited since it would not treat public demand, one of the major factors creating pressure for an independent nuclear capability. The need to alleviate such pressures could cause public disclosure by Indian leaders to the detriment of the interests of the United States.

4. (S) The following comments are furnished concerning the four courses of action listed in paragraph 6 and discussed in paragraph 7:

a. Course A. Of the four courses of action, this one most nearly reflects the views of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. In this regard, it is not believed that publicly announced policy should be reiterated privately to India's leaders, except in response to an Indian initiative. This approach has the advantage of inducing Indian reconsideration of its public opposition to certain US policies prior to seeking additional reassurances of US support. Also, the example of US willingness to assist in the containment of communist aggression in Vietnam should provide considerable reassurance of the identity of US and Indian security interests as they relate to the Chinese threat.

b. Course B. The Joint Chiefs of Staff do not agree that this course of action should be approved for implementation. It is considered doubtful that consultations such as those proposed in Course B could long remain private. Public disclosure of such consultations could impair further our relations with Pakistan and induce Pakistan to seek closer alliance with Communist China. Additionally, such consultations with India would no doubt lead other nations to seek increased assurances of US protection. As written, Course of Action B also implies an increased US commitment to Indian defense, which could lead to increased Indian demands on US resources. It is also doubted that India would regard the added security through such an approach as sufficient to forego or postpone a decision to acquire nuclear weapons. With respect to a "hot line" between India and the United States, no need for such an instrument is foreseen. Its purely psychological value would probably be offset by the great cost of such an elaborate communications link and the demand by many other nations for such links. Concerning the proposal that prior approval be granted for implementation of the policy under certain conditions, it is believed appropriate that the department or agency with primary concern notify other interested agencies and secure their concurrence in any implementing action.

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c. Course C. It is agreed that this course of action should be rejected. While India's security is a matter of continuing concern to the United States, the assumption by the United States of the risks inherent in providing India a nuclear umbrella, as in the case of NATO Europe, is not warranted.

d. Course D. The Joint Chiefs of Staff agree that this is not an acceptable course of action under present and foreseeable circumstances.

5. (U) The Joint Chiefs of Staff agree with the conclusions in paragraph 4.

6. (S) In regard to the conclusion in paragraph 9, the Joint Chiefs of Staff do not concur that an examination of problems and possibilities relating to the defense of India should be included within the scope of current studies concerning the deployment of an ABM system for the protection of the United States.

7. (S) Estimates by the National Intelligence Community conclude that India will probably detonate a nuclear device within the next few years despite any guarantees which might be proffered by the nuclear powers. The Joint Chiefs of Staff share the concern of other agencies of the National Government that a decision by India to adopt an independent nuclear capability will be detrimental to the security interests of the Free World; however, it is not believed prudent for the United States, in its attempts to forestall such a decision, to incur risks which could compound the over-all US security problem.

8. (S) The Joint Chiefs of Staff recommend that the United States make no approaches to India on security issues beyond those already announced publicly.

For the Joint Chiefs of Staff:

SIGNED

EARLE G. WHEELER  
Chairman  
Joint Chiefs of Staff

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