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Moynihan puts his foot in it

Associated Press

NEW DELHI —Ambassador Daniel Moynihan, author of a blunt diplomatic dispatch on U.S. intelligence activities and India's nuclear plans last week, is returning to Washington for what are termed "consultations."

Embassy officials said the trip had been arranged before Moynihan sent his strongly worded cable to Secretary of State Henry Kissinger last week.

The cable could have major repercussions on Indo-American relations and Moynihan's future as ambassador.

According to published excerpts of the cable, Moynihan predicted that Prime Minister Indira Gandhi will "proceed to develop nuclear weapons and a missile delivery system, preaching non-violence all the way."

That view could damage Moynihan's relationship with Mrs. Gandhi because it makes light of her repeated statements that India will use nuclear energy only for peaceful purposes.

Moynihan also said in the cable that reports that the Central Intelligence Agency helped undermine the regime of former Chilean President Salvador Allende had confirmed Mrs. Gandhi's "worst suspicions and genuine fears" about American policy toward India.

"She is not sure but that we would be content to see others like her overthrown," Moynihan is reported to have cabled Kissinger. "She knows full well that we have done our share and more of bloody and dishonorable deeds."

Excerpts from the Moynihan cable appeared in Indian newspapers yesterday morning, but there was no reaction from the government.