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Buddha led to US shock &

Pokhran-I Plan Caught American Spooks Unawares: Declassified Papers

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Buddha" was successfully conducted at Pokhran on May awares ons test and was caught unarations for a nuclear weap Nixon era missed India's prep-Mumbai: The American in-telligence community in the when "Smiling

ar test in Pokharan in 1974. A sion to conduct its first nucle dia to go ahead with the deci and its overtures to China in secret State Department intel clear weapons, saying there was "little doubt" that the 14, 1972, acknowledged that US the early 70s apparently led india's decision making on nupolicy had an impact on In then president Richard Nix igence note, dated January US tilt towards Pakistan

hran-II tests in 1998, some 25

ing Buddha as well as the Pokthe US in the dark over Smil

years later.

Archive and the American.

by the US National Security tem made public on Monday

community staff

A declassified intelligence



department intelligence the decision to conduct its Pakistan and his overtures Nixon's tilt towards note recently revealed first N-test, a secret state led India to go ahead with to China in the early 70s

India caughtup with its initia-tives with China and the Vietshows US had taken its eye of national History Nuclear Proliferation Inter-Project

calculations. The revelation

on's announcement of his trip

means India managed to keep to China changed New Delhi's

a test was in the works." surprise in part because the not been looking for signs that intelligence community had namwar. The record says, "India's 18 May, 1974 caught the US by peaceful nuclear explosion on

ority to the Indian nuclear icymakers assigned a low prion the topic fell off during the sense of urgency "to deterprogramme and there was no ed to icy vibes between New The oversight can be attribut-20 months before the tests" vice. Intelligence and producpreparing to test a nuclear de mine whether New Delhi was the Nixon era. tion (analysis and reporting) Delhi and Washington during Nixon administration pol-

years before the test, the US tion by American intelligence make preparations for an un-(INR) predicted India could Intelligence and Research State Department's Bureau of derground test without detec-In early 1972, however, two

US government had given a The INR report warned the

> "relatively modest priority" to relevant intelligence collecstrategy" towards Beijing and tion activities. The White the Vietnam war and "a grand House was more focused on

seeming credibility", ernment officials (US) could reports about a test had such quite overwhelming. though a subsequent lead sugdia's nuclear intentions by they prompted a review of Inagainst nuclear tests in late ment had cautioned India gested otherwise," it said. While the US State Departmade a decision to test alnot decide whether India had INR and other government es-tablishments. "In the end gov-1970, the concern was never apparent reliability However, the small spate of