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43



# INTELLIGENCE NOTE

BUREAU OF INTELLIGENCE AND RESEARCH

June 29, 1973

## ARMS CONTROL: CHINA EXPLODES A HYDROGEN BOMB

Chinese Multi-Megaton Nuclear Test. On June 27, just five days after the signing of the agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union on the prevention of nuclear war, China conducted its 15th nuclear test, its first since March 18, 1972. According to a statement by the Joint Atomic Energy Intelligence Committee (US), the yield was about 2.4 megatons and the explosion, which took place at the Lop Nor test site in the northwestern province of Sinkiang, was at an altitude of about 7,000 feet above the terrain. It is believed to have been dropped by a bomber. To date, there has been no official comment from the PRC on the signing of the US-USSR agreement on the prevention of nuclear war. The Chinese press has reported the signing without comment.

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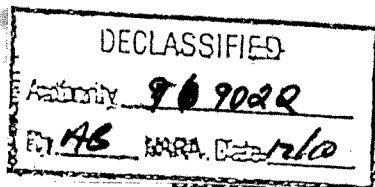
China Explains Explosion With Old Formulations. According to Hong Kong press reports, China, in confirming the latest explosion, replewed some familiar ground in explaining that the aim of the explosion was purely for defensive purposes and to break the monopoly of the superpowers in the nuclear field. It repeated its by-now-standard theme that it would never be

1

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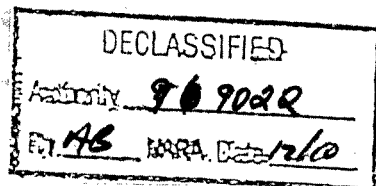
- 2 -

the first nation to use nuclear weapons. China has demanded US and Soviet assurances against the first use of atomic weapons, particularly against non-nuclear countries, as a price for cooperation in nuclear disarmament matters. China opposes measures on ending nuclear testing without actual nuclear disarmament.

The issue of no-first-use of nuclear weapons was the subject of a heated exchange between the Soviet Union and China at last fall's UN General Assembly consideration of the Soviet-sponsored resolution on the renunciation of the use of force and permanent prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons. The Chinese, in recalling their long-time proposal that all nuclear countries "undertake" not to be the first to use nuclear weapons, argued that their proposal, unlike that of the Soviets, which they termed as "sheer sophistry," was unconditional. At that time, the Soviets assured us privately at the General Assembly that their proposal would not inhibit the use of nuclear weapons against a conventional attack.

China's Neighbors Criticize Test. Not surprisingly, adverse reaction to the latest Chinese nuclear test came from Australia, Japan, and New Zealand. Prime Minister Whitlam of Australia issued a press statement condemning the test and he indicated he was instructing the Australian Ambassador in

SECRET/NO FOREIGN DISSEM



NO FOREIGN DISSEM

- 3 -

Peking to protest to the Chinese authorities. Prime Minister Kirk of New Zealand also issued a statement opposing the latest test, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs delivered a protest note to the Chinese Ambassador. The Japanese Embassy in Peking made an oral protest to the Foreign Office which refused to accept it. The Japanese expressed surprise that Japanese seismological facilities failed to record the test on June 27. The press speculates that bad weather was the cause of the non-detection.

Concern About French Test. The Chinese action added to the concern about the proposed French nuclear tests in the Pacific. Both Australia and New Zealand have been mounting an intensive campaign aimed at preventing the French nuclear test series expected to begin soon at the French nuclear test center in the Pacific on the Muruora Atoll (Tuamotu Archipelago, French Polynesia). China and France are the only countries which conduct nuclear tests in the atmosphere.

Australia and New Zealand have been pressing this matter whenever and wherever they can--in the United Nations, at the International Court of Justice, and even at the World Health Assembly in Geneva, which last month adopted an Australian-sponsored resolution deploring nuclear testing in the atmosphere. The UN General Assembly last fall adopted a resolution

SECRET/NO FOREIGN DISSEM

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SECRET/NO FOREIGN DISSEM

- 4 -

introduced by New Zealand and cosponsored by other countries of the Pacific area which called for the suspension of atmospheric tests "in the Pacific or anywhere else in the world." The special stress on ending tests in the Pacific area was aimed at stopping French nuclear tests in the Pacific. Within the last week the International Court of Justice in The Hague issued separate orders on initiatives by Australia and New Zealand, pending final decision, on an 8 to 6 vote (two judges were ill). The ICJ orders called on the French Government to avoid nuclear tests containing radioactive fall-out on Australian and New Zealand territory. France contends that the ICJ has no jurisdiction in this matter and that France is not bound by the decisions.

INR/Strategic and General Research  
 Director : FHPerez  
 Analyst : FFoley  
 Ext. : 23361  
 Released by: L. Weiss

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