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INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM\*

World Reaction to Communist China's Third  
Nuclear Explosion - A Preliminary Survey

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Summary

World reaction to Communist China's third nuclear explosion has produced no major surprises, though there are a number of reactions of more than usual interest. Particularly striking is the indication that the Japanese are beginning to have doubts about their national security and to feel that Communist China poses a threat to Japan. Similarly, the Indian Government is under increased pressure to construct a nuclear weapon in order to contain the threat of a nuclear China. Indonesia, since its change of regime, is no longer one of China's sincerest admirers--a fact reflected in its reaction to the nuclear test. Pakistan is warmer in its reaction than it was in the past. In the Western Hemisphere, the countries on the west coast of South America are beginning to be disturbed at the prospect of future Chinese as well as French nuclear tests affecting the Pacific Ocean area.

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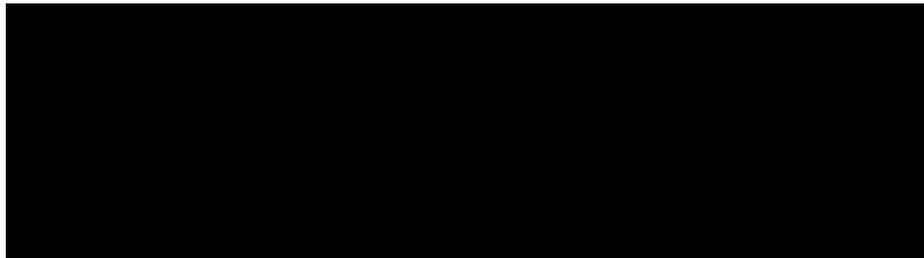
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INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

WORLD REACTION TO COMMUNIST CHINA'S THIRD  
NUCLEAR EXPLOSION - A PRELIMINARY SURVEY



DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

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European Communist Countries

The Soviet Union, as it did with the first two Chinese nuclear explosions, merely reported the latest detonation in a one-sentence TASS announcement, which also mentioned that the Chinese device contained thermonuclear materials. In Czechoslovakia, Prague Radio pointed out the "negative world reaction" and criticized the Chinese for distorting Soviet efforts to halt the spread of nuclear weapons. Yugoslav reaction was marked by alarm and sharp criticism. Belgrade's TANYUG on 10 May quoted a Soviet Foreign Ministry official as saying in response to questions that "we are against nuclear tests and have proved this by signing the Moscow treaty." Bulgaria and East Germany reported the test only as a news item. Albania praised China's achievement and added that the Chinese would never use their nuclear weapons first. Nothing as yet has been heard from Poland, Rumania, or Hungary.

Far Eastern Communist Countries

Both North Vietnam and the Liberation Front in South Vietnam not unexpectedly responded quickly with high praise for Communist China's third nuclear explosion. Hanoi's reaction echoed its statements following the two previous Chinese tests and was equally laudatory regarding China's technical skill. It described the explosion as a "new tremendous success of the Chinese people." Liberation Front chairman Nguyen Huu Tho, in a message to the Chinese, called the event a "splendid achievement demonstrating the clear-sighted leadership of the CCP headed by Chairman Mao." Thus far, there has been no reaction from North Korea.

Western Europe

There has been no official reaction by West European governments to the Chinese test. Most of the West European press stresses the greater urgency for disarmament and/or a nonproliferation agreement, but there is a notable lack of panic in the reporting and a frequently expressed belief that this test by itself will not change the strategic balance in Asia or lead to a more reckless Chinese foreign policy.

In the United Kingdom, the Manchester Guardian recognized the test as "a remarkable scientific and technological achievement," but said it was leading to the creation of "a ruinous white elephant." The Birmingham Post (Conservative) noted that Chinese nuclear development would make China less likely to take overt military action against the United States in Vietnam for fear of US retaliation against Chinese nuclear installations.

Both the French and Italian Communist papers were critical of the Chinese test. They denounced the Chinese statement citing Soviet-American collusion as the reason for the Chinese nuclear weapons program. The Communist L'Unita in Italy said, "We remain convinced that nuclear disarmament is more than ever necessary, and we reject as grotesque the assertion that the possession of nuclear weapons is necessary to China in order to thwart a fantastic collusion between the USSR and the United States against China or any other people."

In West Germany Die Welt (Hamburg independent) regretted the explosion, but said it did not surprise anyone nor could it be expected to have "any direct political or military consequences." Deutschlandfunk considers it logical, now that Peking has the bomb, for it to adopt a more moderate policy. It notes, however, that "maybe this is only Western logic."

#### Middle East

The only reaction thus far available from the Arab states is a commentary in a Syrian Government newspaper in Damascus which hailed the Chinese nuclear explosion as "a great achievement" marking the end of the imperialist monopoly of nuclear weapons. The paper used the occasion to extol Communist China in general and to criticize US policy on Vietnam and Formosa. The commentary probably reflects Chinese Communist influence among some of the extremist editors of the paper as well as the generally radical orientation of the present Baath socialist regime which seized power in February.

There has been no noted reaction from Greece, Turkey, or Iran.

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South Asia

In India the net effect of the Chinese test was to increase the intensity of demands that New Delhi get on with its own nuclear weapons program. [REDACTED] a significant shift in parliamentary opinion on the question, particularly within Congress Party ranks. About one third of the members of the Executive Committee representing congress party members of Parliament, at a special meeting convened to discuss the Chinese blast, spoke out in favor of building the bomb. Several of these legislators had previously been opposed to an Indian nuclear weapons program or had adopted a wait-and-see attitude.

Official government spokesmen, however, reiterated New Delhi's previous policy of restraint. After condemning the Chinese test as a "grave hazard to the health and safety of peoples...likely to be affected by radioactive fallout," External Affairs Minister Swaran Singh declared in Parliament that the new explosion did not vitiate earlier conclusions. He added, however, that Indian policy will be kept constantly under review. He said New Delhi still looks upon world nuclear disarmament as the best guarantor of India's security. Prime Minister Gandhi also re-emphasized that Indian nuclear efforts will be limited to peaceful applications. She reportedly told the Congress parliamentary executive, however, that the policy is not irreversible.

The Indian press reflected almost universal alarm at the new Chinese test, and most papers called for a re-examination of India's policies. There was little agreement, however, on what India's response would be..

The chairman of Pakistan's Atomic Energy Commission, in a statement to the press, termed the explosion proof of remarkable Chinese technological progress and a tribute to Asian scientific skill. He noted that the explosion of a hydrogen bomb had not yet been accomplished by France. The AEC chairman anticipated no harmful effects on the Pakistani population from the fallout.

Nearly all of the newspapers in West Pakistan welcomed the Chinese explosion, many of them terming

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it a great victory for Asia. Several editorial writers foresaw a more effective voice for China in Asian affairs, with an independent newspaper in Lahore commenting that the USSR and the United States and other Western powers could no longer threaten to use nuclear weapons on Asian nations. Most newspaper writers coupled their praise of Chinese technological skill with demands that Peking be admitted to the United Nations.

A semiofficial government newspaper in West Pakistan, while congratulating the Chinese on their achievement, commented that proliferation of nuclear weapons was hardly an edifying development. It expressed the hope that with the nuclear powers living on "a balance of terror," they might find it in their own interest to come to the conference table in a search for nuclear disarmament.

In Nepal a Foreign Ministry spokesman said his government was "not happy" about the testing of nuclear devices anywhere in the world, and called for the banning of nuclear weapons as a first step toward general and complete disarmament.

#### Southeast Asia

Indonesia's reaction to the Chinese nuclear blast has been sparse and has been limited to press comment. Its general tone is negative but rational--indicating acceptance of an unpleasant fact. This contrasts with reaction to the first Chinese test in 1964, when the coordinator minister for public relations said that China's feat was an open announcement that Asians have capabilities equal to those of Western nations and that the West can no longer encircle the peoples of Asia and Africa.

The newspaper which now reflects the Indonesian Foreign Ministry views has commented that China had joined the nuclear club without foreign assistance and that the principal threat of China's nuclear device is political and psychological rather than military. It suggested, however, that the "world can expect more difficult times ahead in relations with the Peking regime." One Indonesian Army paper said the purpose of China's explosion was to intimidate the United States, the USSR, and the weaker powers

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on China's borders. It recommended that those countries band together and "reply to the Chinese threat proportionately."

Thus far, there has been no official reaction from the governments of South Vietnam, Thailand, and Laos.

#### The Far East

The Japanese Government has publicly denounced the Chinese Communists' third nuclear test in terms similar to those it used to condemn earlier tests, and has reaffirmed its rejection of nuclear weapons for Japan. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] that the latest test has made the Chinese Communist threat to Japan credible is borne out by editorial reaction in leading papers, which for the first time unanimously warn of the possible Chinese menace to Japan's security. Earlier tests had not significantly affected the popular attitude that China did not constitute a threat to Japan. The cumulative effect of the tests and of recent Chinese behavior is now apparently beginning to work a major change in Japanese attitudes.

The Chinese test received heavy coverage in all South Korean newspapers. Stories referred to the device as a thermonuclear or hydrogen one. Most press comments echoed South Korean Government statements calling the test inhumane savagery which ignored the world's desire for peace and security. Feature articles emphasized the danger to Koreans of fallout from the test.

Taipei reacted to the third Chinese nuclear explosion by attempting to minimize its impact. The press placed reports of the explosion below stories on Vietnam and reassurances of US protection. Official spokesmen emphasized that the explosion did not increase the immediate threat to Taiwan but did demonstrate the aggressiveness of Peking and the need to destroy the Communist regime.

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Africa

President Sekou Toure of Guinea on 11 May sent a formal message of warm congratulations to Chinese President Liu Shao-chi, stating "We have learned with real pleasure of the new scientific (achievement)... we were particularly touched by your offer to renew the meeting of the world conference for the total cessation of nuclear and thermonuclear arms." In Zambia President Kaunda said that the world great powers had no moral right to condemn Communist China's latest nuclear test. He remarked that as long as China is treated like an outcast "then she is bound to act like an outcast." He said India is the only country with a moral right to criticize China because it is the only country with a capability to produce nuclear weapons which has taken a policy decision on principle not to do so. Kaunda urged China's admission to the United Nations. Peking radio on 11 May quoted officials of the Pan-Africanist Congress of South Africa and the Southwest African People's Organization of Southwest Africa as congratulating China on its latest feat.

The Ghana radio quoted UN Secretary General Thant's comment that any nuclear or thermonuclear test is regrettable. It went on to say that it is not any individual country's policy that is of overriding concern but the total accumulation of destructive nuclear potential that is built up in the world. It called on the present nuclear powers to save the world by starting to eliminate the forces of nuclear destruction which threaten world peace. In Nigeria also, the radio broadcast a statement condemning China and charging that Peking wishes to hold the world to ransom through the possession of nuclear weapons.

Latin America

Countries on the west coast of South America are particularly sensitive to nuclear tests at this time in view of French plans to conduct such tests in the Pacific Ocean area. The Chilean and Peruvian governments used the occasion of the Chinese test to reiterate their opposition to atomic experiments and the use of nuclear weapons for warlike purposes. These governments denounced the latest explosion not

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only as being against the authentic policy of peace but also because of the danger it involves for all humanity. This statement was coordinated in advance with Ecuador and Colombia. The Ecuadorean Foreign Ministry in a separate message condemned the nuclear explosion and stated that tests of this kind are a blow to the world's fervent desire to achieve disarmament in order to ensure peace.

The only Middle American reaction noted thus far has come from Cuba. The Cuban press played the story in a straightforward fashion, emphasizing Washington's "miscalculation" of China's nuclear capabilities. Cuban-Chinese relations are presently at a low ebb, and the Cubans used the Chinese bomb blast as a vehicle for twitting the United States rather than as an excuse for congratulating Peking.

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