



Directorate of Intelligence

# PROLIFERATION DIGEST

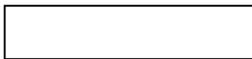


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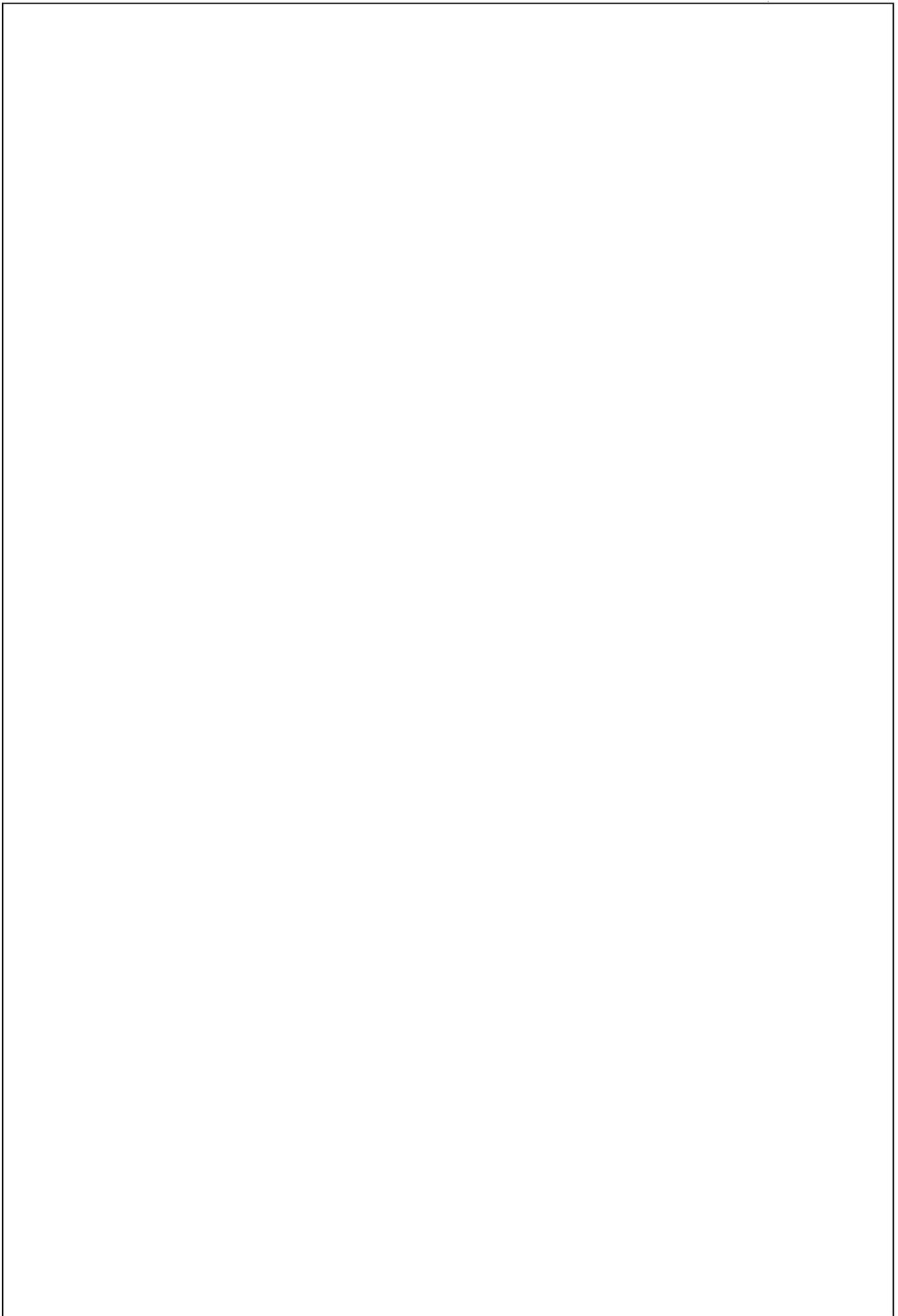


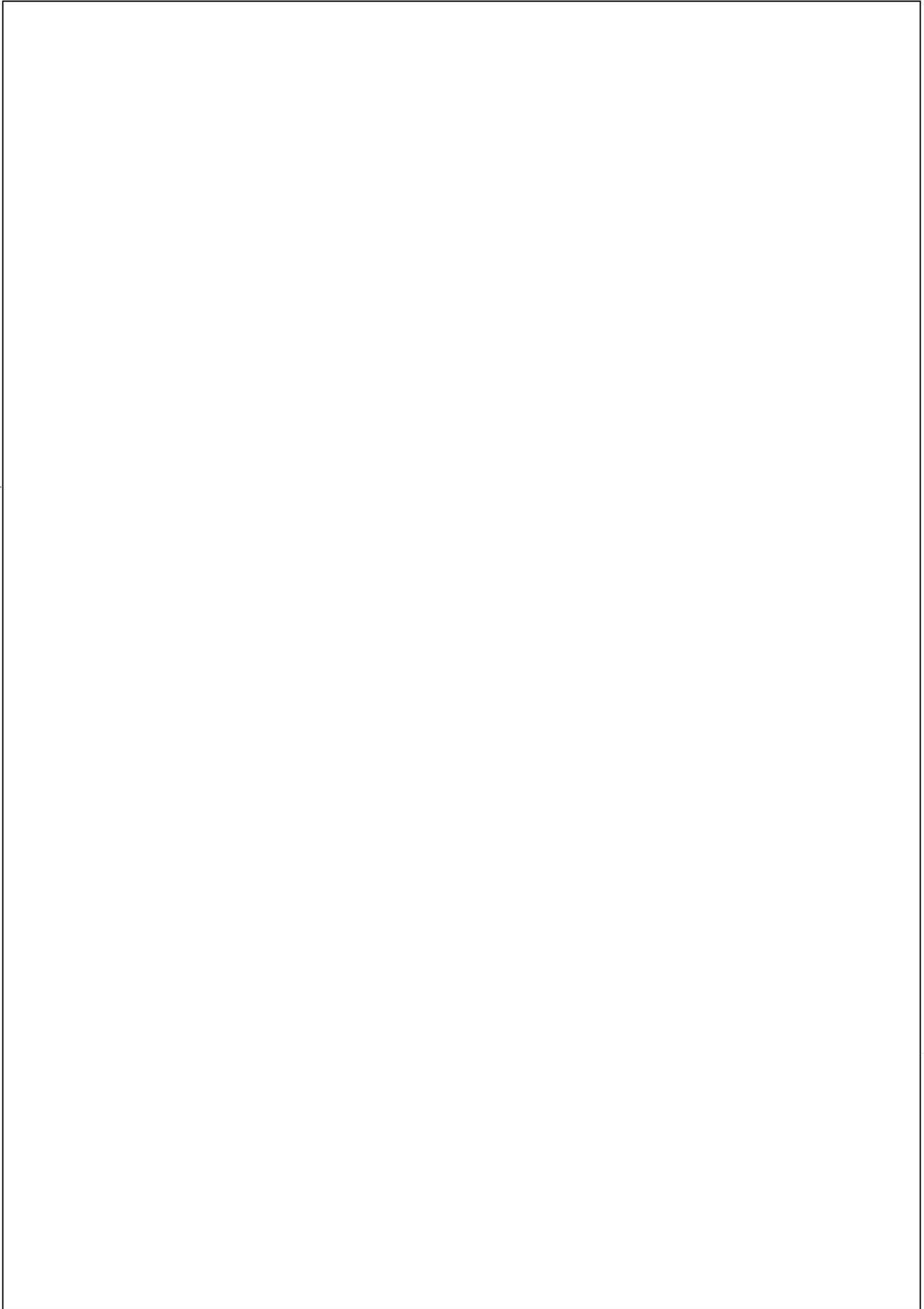
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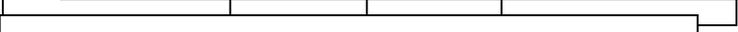




**China Plans Ambitious Nuclear Test Schedule for 1996**

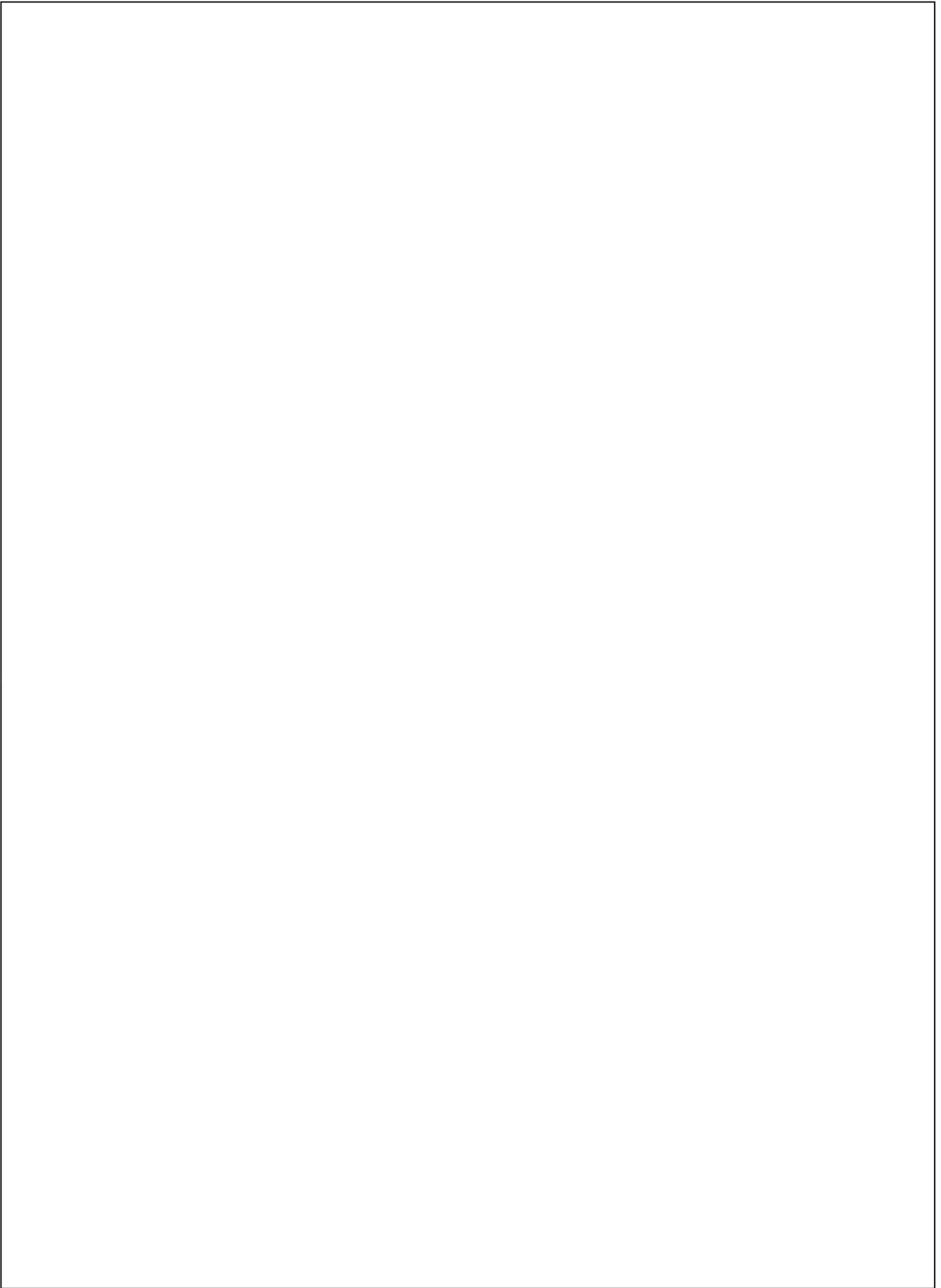


[Redacted] China is poised this year to conduct a record number of nuclear tests—up to four—at its Lop Nur test site. These tests probably will include three tests [Redacted]



[Redacted] This accelerated schedule probably is aimed at collecting additional test data before a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty is signed.







### China Plans Ambitious Nuclear Test Schedule for 1996

  
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*This accelerated schedule probably is aimed at collecting additional test data before a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) is signed. *

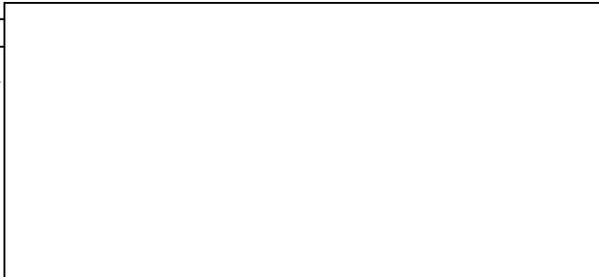
#### Accelerated Test Program

China's test schedule for 1996 is its most ambitious ever—the four planned tests represent twice the usual number conducted in recent years. 

 two of the four test sites are in late-stage test preparations, one is in early-stage preparations, and one is in the site-preparation stage 



Beijing maintains that it has a right to test until a CTBT enters into force. China's efforts to expedite its test program and conduct four tests this year suggest, however, that Beijing is concerned that continued testing after signing a CTBT—which could occur by yearend—would result in sharp international condemnation. With the recent conclusion of France's nuclear test program, the Chinese are under added pressure to end their program. 



China's track record for achieving its test goals is mixed. Although three tests were planned in 1994 and again in 1995, only two were actually conducted in each year.<sup>1</sup> Barring political or technical delays, we judge that the Chinese probably will be able to complete the first two  tests by late June. The  test could be conducted by August, and the last  test could occur in October or November.

