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 CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
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 STATEMENT ABOUT AN ATOMIC EXPLOSION IN THE USSR

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INTRODUCTION: A review of foreign radio reactions to the new atomic situation, since the President's announcement on 23 September, brings out two broad conclusions: (1) Non-Soviet reactions outside the United States, like those in the United States, are in general agreement with current American policy; and (2) Soviet reactions are cautious, non-committal on most of the concrete points at issue, and strictly subordinated to a greatly increased emphasis on the Soviet desire for peace.

NON-SOVIET REACTIONS: Foreign reactions outside the Soviet sphere are in general very similar to those in the United States. There is agreement on the urgency of adequate control, but disagreement on its possibility. Some predict continued Soviet refusal to permit adequate inspection, while others hope that the USSR may now be more amenable to negotiation.

SOVIET AND SOVIET-CONTROLLED REACTIONS: There is much exultant repetition of the idea that the ruling circles in the West can no longer "blackmail" or "intimidate" the "democratic" countries as they have done in the past. Apart from this, however, the most striking fact is the cautiousness displayed in Moscow's own reaction to the event. It is shown in several ways:

Slow reaction: For the first five days after the announcement Moscow confined itself almost entirely to distributing the TASS statement and quoting favorable foreign comment. It was not until nine days after the announcement that the first full-length Soviet commentary on it appeared.

Limited volume: Apart from news reports (which have been widely distributed), there has been nothing like an all-out propaganda capitalization of the event. Even after the first full-length commentary on it appeared, the bulk of the comment has consisted of single sentences or paragraphs embedded in other contexts.

Calmness of tone: The tone of the original TASS statement has been maintained. There are rather frequent references, for example, to the idea that the USSR has had the bomb (or the "secret"--it is not clear which) since 1947.

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Emphasis on peace: The most noticeable change in Moscow's radio propaganda during the week after the announcement was not a capitalization of the new atomic situation but an enormous increase in the already considerable emphasis on peace; and when the bomb has been mentioned it has nearly always been in this context. The terrifying implications of the subject have been in effect minimized by wrapping it in many layers of "peace" propaganda. The impression is given that the Soviet Union is by no means "brandishing" the bomb (which it has accused others of doing), but considers it only as a way of neutralizing the "blackmail" of the West, and thereby ensuring peace.

Few threats of retaliation: Ehrenburg's statement that "from Moscow to Philadelphia it is as far as from Philadelphia to Moscow" has been quoted in the American press. It is therefore relevant to note: (a) that Ehrenburg's implied threat of bombing American cities is paralleled in other monitored Soviet material only by one short and relatively colorless statement by a Soviet scientist; and (b) that Ehrenburg is the least typical of the writers quoted by the Soviet radio; several times in the past he has departed in a similar way from the more cautious lines which characterize Soviet propaganda as a whole. On the whole, the Soviet radio does not engage in "scaremongering."

"Ban the bomb": Together with the "blackmail" theme, the most frequent single theme has been that the Soviet Union stands by its policy of advocating unconditional prohibition of atomic weapons, with "strict" enforcement of this ban.

No commitment on inspection, international ownership, the veto, etc.: The practical problems of "strict" control, however, are almost wholly avoided. For example, there has been no monitored Soviet mention of the controversies centering around the meaning of "adequate" inspection, international ownership of atomic energy facilities, the veto, etc.

No stress on the destructiveness of the bomb: There has not been any recent monitored discussion of the military effectiveness of atomic as compared with other weapons. (The general Soviet position on this has been that the effectiveness of the bomb is greatly overrated.)

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