



(Classification)



OPERATIONAL INFORMATION REPORT  
Washington, D.C.

OVERSEAS REACTION TO THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE TEST OF WEST  
GERMAN NUCLEAR EXPLOSIVES

(Prepared Pursuant to NSAS Action No. 100-100)  
Approved by the Director, February 17, 1959

A. SUMMARY.

1. In general, reaction to the West German announcement was only mild. Most Free World countries accepted it as a development of no comment. The only countries which expressed alarm were those which are always particularly sensitive to arms matters.

2. The announcement did not create editorial comment in any part of Europe, as it might have, were not the West German announcement the rearming of West Germany, although one of the main lines of the propaganda lines has been the West German defense system, which is a threat in which Western Europe will be a direct participant.

3. There also was little reaction in India, although a few outstanding exceptions the United States was severely criticized for conducting tests which are admittedly dangerous, the atomic hydrogen race which could lead to a totally destructive war and the continuing threat of atomic and hydrogen weapons as a total annihilation.

4. The only Soviet line mention of the report was in West Germany. The rest of the world, including the Soviet Union and Communist China pointedly refused to mention the announcement, but continued to stress their own arms matters in their own statements, mostly in terms of the progress in peaceful uses of atomic energy, the Soviet program for limiting nuclear weapons and limiting conventional armaments, and the USSR's program for limiting atomic weapons.

5. One significant feature of the Soviet line was its deliberate avoidance of admitting that it had developed its own atomic power. Its repeated inference that it was not developing its own atomic power and its civilization which would be the most advanced in the world. Details of the press and radio reports of the Soviet line are given in the report.

B. CONCLUSIONS.

6. Firm conclusions as to the significance of the reaction noted thus far noted will have to await editorial comment. It is felt that the reaction thus far noted will reflect a more long-range outlook of public opinion in the Free World, and officials utilizing the facts of the West German Report. In view of this it is recommended that the report be editorial attention given to the facts of the West German Report.

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missions abroad will be handled in an appropriate manner.

(e) In order to provide statements of our position in perspective, high-level statements and initiatives will continue to emphasize the need for a world free of the threat of an enduring peace, providing the advice of a well-guarded disarmament, to attain the determination of a lasting reduction in international tensions, to keep the world free of any including nuclear weapons, at a level of disarmament, to keep any would-be aggressor, to point out that nuclear weapons, together with the other weapons, have rightly been called the defense shield of the world, and that the world must be the substantive elements of the peace and stability of the world.

Attachment:

Annex "A"

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The only communit reaction was a brief item pointing out the extent of contamination during H-Bomb experiments in the Pacific last year and stating that had this area been populated all human life would have been destroyed.



5. Belgium. The report was given wide coverage in the Belgian press but received no editorial comment.

6. Greece. The report was covered extensively by the Greek press but there was no editorial comment and little public reaction except expressions of approval at the release and a feeling that the report cleared up many obscure points.

7. Other Western European Countries. In all other Western European countries the report received little coverage and no editorial comment.

LATIN AMERICA, CANADA AND ALGERIA  
8. Latin America. In Latin America, there was little coverage of the announcement and no editorial comment.

9. Canada. The Canadian press gave fairly extensive news treatment to the AEC statement. In Ottawa Press comments were in three categories: (a) impossibility of carrying on total war with modern nuclear weapons; (b) the need for new and better civil defense plans; (c) the hopelessness of civil defense.

10. Australia. The Australian press took a very sober and rational view of the announcement. Of the editorial comments reported, one points out that the H-Bomb is a weapon of race suicide, while another comments that every rational being should make every effort to prevent the use of weapons of mass destruction. One paper points out that the announcement was a propaganda device to call the bluff of the communists who have been boasting of successes in the field of nuclear fission.

#### MIDDLE EAST

11. India. Summaries of the report were carried in the Indian press but given little prominence in contrast with the subsequent UK decision to produce the H-Bomb and the Soviet disarmament call of 17 February. However, there were too outstanding reactions against the report and the tests which preceded it. Rajagopalachari, a member of the working committee of the Congress Party who has a history of being anti-Communist, rather vigorously attacked the United States for conducting dangerous nuclear tests and for using the threat of nuclear weapons as a mechanism of power politics. In the same vein an editorial in the Hindustan Standard was highly critical of the United States for conducting tests in the face of the effects outlined in the report. This was followed by two editorials in the same paper, one attacking the Peterson statement that atomic attack would not mean the end of the world and the other appealing to the Western Powers to stop the atomic arms race.

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Without referring directly to the AEC announcement, India's president Rajendra Prasad told his parliament on February 21 that he hoped that the fearful nature of these weapons will lead not only to the total banning of their production but also to the realization that war itself should be abolished as a means of settling any problem.

12. Other Countries in the Middle East. In other Middle Eastern countries there was little news coverage and no editorial comment.

#### FAR EAST

13. Japan. The Tokyo press received the report with alarm headlines and maps of the potential fall-out area centered in Tokyo. Mainichi of Sunday 20 February carried the only anti-American report noted in a feature summary of the announcement with scathing comments by three left-wing university professors who were particularly critical that the report did not mention the injuries of the Fukuryu Maru fishermen and the Rongelap natives. The pro-US Nippon Times, recognized the need for continued testing by the United States, and the same paper recalled Balgail's remark to the effect the USSR will not limit experiments on atomic weapons.

14. Hong Kong and Taipei. In both Hong-Kong and Taipei the announcement was given minor news coverage with no editorial comment.

15. Other Far East Countries. There was little reportage and no editorial comment in other countries in the Far East.

#### SOVIET BLOC

16. Soviet Union. In line with the Soviet policy of minimizing if not altogether disregarding tangible evidence of US progress in atomic research, the Soviet press and radio has made no mention of the AEC announcement. However, atomic energy matters continue to get heavy play with emphasis on Soviet advances in the chaining of atomic energy for industrial purposes, and on the Soviet proposals for abolition of atomic weapons and limitation of conventional armaments. Also, on 26 February Pravda reprinted an article entitled "the Hopes and Failures of the American Policy from a Position of Strength" which points out that the West does not have superiority in nuclear weapons and that unless the West goes along with the Soviet proposals for limitation of armaments and banning of atomic weapons the western system is doomed for destruction.

17. East Germany. The announcement was given limited coverage in East Berlin. Four East Berlin newspapers carried Communist AEM agency stories, combining the delay on Nevada experiments with Strauss' admission of "certain risk" to civilians.

On 16 February the East German Home Service briefly outlined the mass destructive effects of the bombs as described in the announcement, coupled this with commentary on the total destructive effect of atomic weapons and

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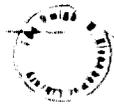
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used the total as a peg for propaganda against West German ratification of the Paris Accords, pointing out that ratification would bring on a war in which Germany would be an atomic battleground.

18. Communist China. While there is considerable discussion of atomic matters over Communist Chinese radio there is no mention of the AEC report. However, there have been charges that the United States Government is whipping up an A-Bomb scare in the United States to create acceptance of atomic warfare as an inevitability. In line with this, the tenor of commentary is that China has little to fear from atomic warfare, that only the highly industrialized Western countries would be devastated.

19. Other Bloc Countries. No mention was made of the report in other countries of the Communist bloc.

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