



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

ON THE RECORD UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED

DPC 195

TRANSCRIPT OF DAILY PRESS CONFERENCE, TUESDAY,
SEPTEMBER 29, 1964.

MR. McCLOSKEY: We have had a number of questions in the Department this morning growing out of a broadcast last night on the subject of Chinese nuclear capability. The following is to be attributed to the Secretary:

"For some time it has been known that the Chinese Communists were approaching the point where they might be able to detonate a first nuclear device. Such an explosion might occur in the near future. If it does occur, we shall know about it and will make the information public. It has been known since the 1950's that the Chinese Communists had been working to develop a nuclear device. They not only failed to sign but strongly opposed the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty which has been signed by over 100 countries. The detonation of a first device does not mean a stockpile of nuclear weapons and the presence of modern delivery systems. The United States has fully anticipated the possibility of Peiping's entry into the nuclear weapons field and has taken it into full account in determining our military posture and our own nuclear weapons program. We would deplore atmospheric testing in the face of serious efforts made by almost all other nations to protect the atmosphere from further contamination and to begin to put limitations upon a spiraling arms race." That is to be attributed to the Secretary of State.

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Q. What would you say occasioned this statement?

A. There was a broadcast last night dealing with this subject which raised a number of inquiries in the Department this morning.

Q. Could you identify the broadcast -- the source of the broadcast?

A. It was a network television broadcast.

Q. Bob, there have been a number of broadcasts and articles on this subject in recent years, could you tell us what it was? Were there allegations or reports on this thing that you can cite to which this is directed? I mean, what occasioned the Secretary's statement?

A. I think there was some speculation as to the degree of imminence.

Q. In other words, it was indicated that it was imminent?

A. That was the speculation of the broadcast, yes, as I understood it.

Q. Well, in order to make the story make any sense, that's what I mean.

Q. Bob, as I recall, Under Secretary Harriman when he was Assistant Secretary for Far East said in 1962 the Chinese might explode a device by the end of that year. Has there been any further information that has come to the Department's attention which now makes it likely?

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A. Well, I wouldn't want to say anything more than -- and I put this ON BACKGROUND -- from a variety of sources, we know that it is quite possible that a first Chinese nuclear explosion could occur at any time.

Q. You say from a variety of sources?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. I believe that the Department has also said that more than once in the past. Is the current information believed to be somewhat more suggestive or conclusive?

A. I think that is a fair assumption, yes.

Q. I think in Secretary Harriman's speech -- I am just drawing from memory--he indicated in that speech that it would be by the end of this decade before the Chinese could deliver. Is that still a fair estimate?

A. Here again I am on BACKGROUND, -- the matter of delivery systems is, I would think, a long way from realization by the Chinese Communists. That effort, needless to say, is a long and difficult process even for a very highly industrialized nation with a high degree of sophistication.

Q. Taking that into account, are you prepared to address yourself in any way to the psychological impact in Southeast Asia of the detonation of an initial blast?

A. Well, only to say that from our own point of view the explosion of a first device by the Chinese will not affect our ability or our willingness to assist Asian

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nations to defend themselves against Communist aggression.

Q. That's ON THE RECORD?

A. That is ON BACKGROUND.

Q. Has there been any or will there be any consultation between Washington and Moscow as the prime signatories of the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty on the implications of a possible Chinese atmospheric explosion?

A. I would not want to speculate on just whom we will be discussing this with at this time.

Q. Can you say that there have been any contacts so far regarding this possibility?

A. I don't think I could answer that now. I could say that this possibility has been discussed with our Allies.

Q. Bob, is the United States absolutely positive from the techniques and so on that the Chinese have not or didn't make any sort of nuclear device up to this time?

A. Yes, I think so.

Q. You think that?

A. We are satisfied up until now that they have not detonated any kind of nuclear device.

Q. Has this discussion with the Allies been recent?

A. Yes.

Q. Could you say where and when?

A. No, I would not be in a position to be any more specific now.

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Q. Is there any evidence at all of outside aid in the construction of this device from any country?

A. No, apparently not. The Soviet Union, it's commonly agreed, withdrew whatever technological assistance they were affording several years ago.

Q. Do you have anything to say on what would be the effect on the Test Ban Treaty of a non-signatory conducting atmospheric tests?

A. No, I would not want to speculate on that at this time. I would say, as a personal guess, ON BACKGROUND, that this wouldn't have any drastic effect on the current Test Ban Treaty.

Q. Do you remember offhand whether the treaty contains any clause -- escape clause on the possibility of a third party conducting tests?

A. As I recall, there is some language in the treaty which permits of abrogation, if you like, in terms of supreme national interest. I believe that term is used and I think there is also a clause that calls for a specified period of notification.

Q. It's 90 days?

A. Three months.

Q. But it doesn't refer specifically to the possibility of a third party conducting tests?

A. I don't recall any reference to that but I would want to look at it much more closely to be certain.

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Q. When you're saying there wouldn't be, as a personal guess, you said there wouldn't be an effect on the Test Ban Treaty, were you indicating that the United States would/seek to resume testing if the Chinese explode a nuclear device?

A. Say that again.

Q. Were you trying to indicate that the United States would not seek to abrogate the treaty to resume testing if the Red Chinese detonated the device?

A. Yes, I don't foresee any initiative by the U.S. in this direction. Again, I don't see that, as things now stand, that this will have any affect on the treaty. And remember, too, that we are talking about something that hasn't happened yet.

Q. Can you say where in Red China an explosion might take place?

A. No.

Q. Bob, on another subject, I understand some more African delegates have arrived. Can you say whether anyone in the Department will be seeing any of these representatives?

A. No, I am informed that the Foreign Minister of Ghana is here and I checked just before I came down and there have been no appointments scheduled for any of these gentlemen as of now.

Q. Have they met anybody so far from the Department?

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A. As you know, the Kenya Minister has had talks with Governor Williams. Apparently, no one else has met anyone in the Department. As and when these meetings are set up, we'll let you know.

Q. What's the name of the Kenya Minister?

A. Botsio.. First name is Kojo.

Q. When did he arrive?

A. Oh, apparently in the last day or so.

Q. The Guinean one was due in on Monday.

A. Only that we know he was expected to arrive today.

Q. On another subject, if I may. A few days ago,

just before the weekend, the Chicago Tribune had a story about the burning of some duplicate State Department files.

The Department issued a statement explaining the procedure.

Now today Mr. Miller who is running for office has brought up this question again and has some additional charges to

make impugning the Department's motives. I doubt if you had time to see this story since it just moved. Do you have any comment?

A. No. I'll look at it and see what the remarks are and if there is something that our statement of Friday does not cover, I'll let --

Q. There are a few things particularly in connection with the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee relationship on this thing which was not covered in your statement.

A. I'll read them with some interest.

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Q. That's the spirit!

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Q. Bill Bundy/quoted in Tokyo as saying the war could be expanded outside Viet Nam if that is forced upon us by the Communists, and in the same cycle of news, the President is saying he would be very cautious in dropping bombs and not going North at this stage of the game and "I know some folks that think starting a war would be mighty easy." I have been asked as to whether there is a conflict or discrepancy between these two viewpoints.

A. I don't think so. I have taken note of those remarks and I don't see that there is really any inconsistency. For a long time there have been two constant themes in U.S. Government statements regarding Viet Nam, one essentially that the U.S. does not want a wider war and further that Communist aggression in South Viet Nam is dangerous to the peace. Now these themes, if you will, seem to me to be what were expressed yesterday -- neither are new and neither are inconsistent.

Q. Bob, is there anything new to report on --

A. Excuse me, just a second. I hope to have the text of the Bill Bundy speech reproduced and have it available late today. And I was corrected a minute ago. I referred to the Minister of Kenya -- he is properly the Minister of State.

report in the investiga-

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A. No, I'm afraid not.

Q. Do you have anything on Brosio's series of talks here in the Department yesterday?

A. No, sir. There is nothing I can say about that at this time.

Q. Thank you.

* * * *

Press conference concluded at 1:00 P.M.

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