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WEEKLY SUMMARY

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE

NO FOREIGN DISSEM

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SECRET**CHINESE DEMONSTRATE NUCLEAR WEAPONS DELIVERY CAPABILITY**

Peking has claimed that its fourth nuclear test, conducted on 26 October, was of a weapon delivered by a ballistic missile. The [redacted] evidence available--although indirect--supports this claim, and indicates that the Chinese are making substantial progress toward a missile strike capability. The political impact of the explosion probably netted them some immediate gains, which, however, may be partly offset in the longer run.

The detonation occurred about 100 miles east of the Lop Nor nuclear test site and, like the first two Chinese tests, had a yield in the low-intermediate range.

CHINESE COMMUNIST NUCLEAR TESTING**SECRET**

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The detonation point for the latest test is 350-400 miles from China's missile test center at Shuang-cheng-tzu, and the time of detonation would be compatible with a ballistic missile launch from there at a time suitable for ballistic missile testing.

There is not enough information to establish that the Chinese have developed a ballistic missile and compatible nuclear warhead meeting the requirements of readiness, reliability, and accuracy for a deployable weapons system. The 26 October test, however, indicates that they have made significant progress in solving at least some of the problems involved.

The exact timing of the test may have been adjusted to come during President Johnson's trip for political effect. The necessary developmental work, however, was under way for many months before the Manila Conference was announced. The test came at a

time when the regime was badly in need of a showy achievement. Coming on the heels of the Manila Conference, it also served as a psychological boost to the Vietnamese Communists and as a reminder that China's military potential must be taken into account in any consideration of the Vietnamese situation. Unlike communiqués issued after earlier tests, Peking's announcement this time mentioned the war in Vietnam.

The Chinese may also have hoped that a demonstration of their scientific capabilities would undercut derisive bloc commentary on the excesses of their "cultural revolution." Some of the political and psychological gains that Peking realized from this test, however, will probably be offset over the longer run by the fear aroused in both the Communist and non-Communist worlds that China is becoming an even more dangerous threat to peace.

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