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Authority NND 35152  
By JK NARA Date 4-27-10



DEF 12-1  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
Washington, D.C. 20520

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MEMORANDUM

To: EUR - Mr. Hartman  
From: EUR/WE - Charles K. Johnson <sup>mjk</sup>  
Subject: US Policy toward French Nuclear Tests

Attached for your information is an action memo drafted in PM on the public posture that the US should adopt towards the imminent French nuclear tests. The GOF has announced that this will be the last series of atmospheric tests. In light of this, PM believes the US should modify its established policy of saying as little as possible about the tests. (In the past we have responded to questions about the US attitude towards the tests by saying: "The US has consistently urged all states that have not yet done so to adhere without further delay to the provisions of the Limited Test Ban Treaty of 1963.")

PM along with L, IO and EA prefers option 3 of this paper which "welcomes" the French decision to cease atmospheric testing. S/PRS prefers option 2, "noting" the GOF decision. We, and the NSC staff, prefer option 1, retaining the established policy of making no comment beyond the traditional Test Ban Treaty formulation. We believe that "noting" the GOF decision would be gratuitous and that "welcoming" it would imply criticism of French testing at a time when Giscard is showing obvious interest in improving our relations.

We have discussed this paper with Deputy Assistant Secretary Lowenstein and he has cleared it. While we cannot be sure, we are inclined to believe that Mr. Sonnenfeldt will share our concerns about inhibiting the more constructive tone of US-French relations and support EUR on option 1.

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Drafted: EUR/WE: <sup>mjk</sup>MJHabib:cbp  
6/13/74 x-21726

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
ACTION MEMORANDUM

S/S

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TO : The Acting Secretary  
THROUGH: C - Mr. Sonnenfeldt  
FROM : PM - George S. Vest

US Policy Toward French Nuclear Tests

The Problem

France may begin its 1974 nuclear test series in the atmosphere over their Pacific test center as early as June 15. Accordingly, PM has readied for transmission the annual circular telegram providing US diplomatic and military missions with appropriate background information and instructions governing public comment. Because the new President of France recently ended the policy of silence adopted by the GOF last year to minimize growing worldwide opposition to their atmospheric tests by announcing that this year France will carry out a test series and that this series is expected to be the GOF's last above ground, and considering the imminence of the first test in this series, your guidance concerning public comment by US spokesmen is urgently required.

Background/Analysis

The Office of the new President of France announced on June 8 that this year's atmospheric nuclear tests are expected to be the last French tests conducted above ground. After this year, said the government statement, the French will be able to move to underground nuclear testing. This statement marked a significant change in French policy concerning public discussion of their nuclear test program. It also must have provided some satisfaction to those in the world who have, over the years, sought to influence the French to halt their atmospheric tests.

Since 1969 US policy has precluded making any public statements concerning the conduct by France of nuclear tests in the atmosphere. This policy has stemmed from a) a desire

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to avoid offending the French and b) recognition of the GOF's own reluctance to discuss (or even announce) their tests. It was reconfirmed most recently during the 1973 French test series when President Nixon directed that President Pompidou be informed there would be no USG statements objecting to the French tests. Following is the standard statement used by USG spokesmen in past years to reply to questions about the US attitude toward the French atmospheric tests:

"The US has consistently urged all states that have not yet done so to adhere without further delay to the provisions of the Limited Test Ban Treaty of 1963."

Present US policy toward the French tests has been criticized by various segments of American society. This criticism has been voiced by members of the Congress and the press as well as by the general public. (Some of it comes from proponents of disarmament or those who oppose atmospheric testing for environmental or health reasons. There are others who voice it simply because they dislike the French.) The precise effect of the unhappiness of a segment of US society with US policy toward French atmospheric testing is, of course, impossible to determine. However, given the present charged political atmosphere in this country, it seems reasonable to assume that at least some adverse effect does, indeed, occur. Should the Moscow Summit result in US accession to a Threshold Test Ban treaty, this adverse effect would be further magnified.

The current US policy toward the French tests has also raised a number of political and operational problems with other nations around the world. Some of the more serious of these are listed below:

1. Political Problems

a) Each year the occasion of the French tests generates vigorous public criticism of nuclear testing which, while initially aimed solely at atmospheric testing, invariably expands to include condemnation of all testing, including US underground tests. This "guilt by association" stems at least in part from the fact that US spokesmen do not

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comment on the French tests, whereas many other nations (including Australia, New Zealand, Chile, Peru, Japan, Canada, Sweden, Fiji and the other Pacific island states) are quite free in commenting critically. It results in an intangible, but real, adverse impact on US relations with the other nations concerned.

b) As the uncontrolled criticism described above grows in volume, it ultimately leads to strident calls for a Comprehensive Test Ban. Because the issue has become so emotional, such calls rarely recognize or share the concern which the US has had for years that a CTB must provide means for adequate verification. Thus, US spokesmen are forced to oppose these calls for a CTB, thereby reaping additional political trouble from our failure to condemn the French.

c) In addition to unilateral calls from other nations for a halt to testing, the French atmospheric tests have also been the catalyst for efforts in various international forums (UNGA, Arms Control Committees, UN Specialized Agencies) to secure anti-testing/anti-French resolutions. When these resolutions include either explicit criticism of the French or any criticism of underground tests (implicitly or explicitly), US delegations are forced to abstain from supporting them. These abstentions, in turn, bring to the US at least a portion of the public criticism and disfavor that originally was aimed solely at France.

2. Operational Problems - In the past years, the governments of Australia and New Zealand have voiced strong opposition to French testing in the South Pacific. However, owing to concern over the delicacy of upcoming EEC negotiations, official reaction by New Zealand has thus far been much more subdued this year. This opposition was demonstrated forcefully last year when each nation sought an injunction against the tests from the International Court of Justice. The case is still pending before the ICJ, but last year the Court determined as a "provisional ruling," pending its final decision, that France should refrain from nuclear tests which would deposit radioactive material on the territory of Australia or New Zealand. However, France has refused to recognize the jurisdiction of the ICJ in this case.

The gulf between US policy toward French testing and those of Australia and New Zealand adversely affects the image of the US nuclear posture in those two countries. As

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a consequence, we receive less cooperation from the governments of Australia and New Zealand in a series of defense-related fields than we might otherwise expect. If, for example, our policies were perceived as a bit closer, we would probably somewhat improve the negotiating climate for discussions concerning the resumption of US warship visits to Australian and New Zealand ports.

In view of the problems noted above, and considering the fact that the French have a) broken their own tradition of silence, and b) announced that this year's tests are expected to be the last in the atmosphere, we believe the US could gain political and operational benefits by altering its own policy on this matter. We do not propose that US spokesmen be instructed to volunteer or initiate any announcement or comment; however, we do believe US spokesman should be permitted to "welcome" the French decision to forego further atmospheric tests, or at least to "note" the French decision.

"Noting" the French statements would, of course, be the mildest possible way of recognizing the obvious. Use of this word would give no indication of a value judgment and therefore should not offend the French. (EUR does not agree and believes that taking note of the French statements would be gratuitous.) At the same time, it will in all probability not eliminate the criticism of those in the US and the world who are opposed to the present US policy.

"Welcoming" the French statements would be wholly consistent with the comments made by US spokesmen in many forums for the past several years -- that we urge all nations to adhere to the LTBT. This word, while indicating a value judgment, could mean all things to all people. Those who oppose our present policy might choose to recognize in the word our pleasure that the French have chosen to abandon atmospheric testing. At the same time, some elements in France conceivably might also be pleased with an obvious "pat on the back" for going underground. On the other hand, use of the "welcome" formula might well be seen by the GOF as implying criticism of their testing at a time when they are sending obvious signals of their desire to improve our relations. Moreover, use of the "welcome" formula might also be seen by the French as an attempt on our part to prevent any back sliding on their newly announced test policy. The GOF might resent such action which would raise to some

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degree the political price the GOF would have to pay if it decided it had to continue testing in the atmosphere in 1975. (L and PM believe the likelihood of an adverse French reaction is marginal, since we would be merely reacting positively to a policy the GOF had itself publicly announced.)

The Options

1. Retain present policy: make no public announcements concerning the French tests and restrict public statements to the traditional LTBT formula in response to specific queries.

Pro:

-- Would avoid any possibility of inhibiting the improving tone of US-French relations under Giscard d'Estaing.

Con:

-- Would leave unchanged domestic and international problems associated with present policy.  
-- Might, in view of the recent French statements, be difficult to defend.

2. Advise USG spokesmen that, if questioned, they should "note" French statement but announce that USG has no comment on it beyond the traditional LTBT formula.

Pro:

-- Might avoid offending French.

Con:

-- Could offend French, since they might see it as a gratuitous comment.  
-- Would probably not eliminate criticism of those in the US and the world who oppose present US policy.

3. Advise USG spokesmen that, if questioned, they should supplement the traditional LTBT formula with a statement that USG "welcomes" decision by GOF to end atmospheric tests.

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Pro:

- Would be consistent with stated US policy seeking adherence of all states to LTBT.
- Could please French, since this might be construed as a complimentary statement.
- Could ease political and operational problems which result from current US policy.
- Could help influence French to adhere to their decision to go underground.

Con:

- Could be interpreted by French as implicit criticism of their atmospheric tests and thus counter the improving climate of US-French relations under Giscard d'Estaing.
- Could be seen by France as attempt to foreclose their option to continue atmospheric testing should future circumstances so require.
- Might not satisfy opponents to our present policy since it fails to explicitly criticize atmospheric tests.

Bureau Views:

EUR prefers Option 1 (No change) on the grounds that a) if we change our policy and make any comment about the French testing, our hopes for improved relations with the new French Government might be dealt a serious blow in exchange for minimal benefits elsewhere; b) the French do appreciate our relative silence regarding their tests; c) our silence on this matter results in a rather small political cost to the US; and d) the French are likely to continue their tests regardless of comments by others. ✓ EUR suggests that if we wish to do something positive about the French tests, we should offer France the use of the Nevada Test Site until they complete development of their own underground facilities in the Pacific.) The NSC staff also favors this option.

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S/PRS prefers Option 2 ("Note" French statement) on the grounds that a) any statement indicating a value judgment would undoubtedly lead to further questions concerning our attitude toward this year's atmospheric tests, questions to which US spokesmen would be unable to reply except by use of the LTBT formula; and b) any sort of value judgment may be interpreted by the French as an attempt to foreclose their option to continue atmospheric testing should future circumstances so require.

PM, L, IO, and EA prefer Option 3 ("Welcome" French statement) on the grounds that a) it is consistent with US policy; b) it is likely to provide political and operational benefits to the US; and c) it may encourage French to follow through on their announced intent. DOD and ACDA also favor this option. These bureaus and agencies believe that Option 1 fails to give due regard to the public French announcement of cessation of atmospheric testing and that Option 2 does not provide the advantages sought to be obtained by making a public statement.

Recommendation:

That you authorize me to send to the White House for final clearance the circular telegram, incorporating in it the "welcome" formula (Option 3).

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Alternatively, you may prefer that I send to the White House a telegram incorporating the "note" formula (Option 2).

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Or, alternatively, you may prefer that I send to the White House a telegram which takes no notice of the French statements and simply retains the present LTBT formula.

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Attachment:

Extract of draft telegram showing wording of instruction to US spokesmen under each option

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By J NARA Date 4-27-10

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Clearances: PM/AE - Mr. Handyside  
PM/DCA - Mr. Salmon (draft)  
L/UNA - Mr. Matheson (draft)  
L/PM - Mr. Michel (draft)  
EA/ANP - Mr. Dorrance (draft)  
EUR/WE - Mr. Habib (draft)  
EUR - Mr. Lowenstein (draft)  
IO/UNA - Mr. Black (draft)  
S/PRS - Mr. Hare (subs)  
NSC Staff - Mr. Clift (subs)  
OSD/ISA - Mr. Floyd (subs)  
ACDA - Mr. Corden (subs)

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By JL NARA Date 4-27-10

Extract from cable

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8. US posture on French tests: USG does not plan and US spokesmen should not attempt to volunteer or initiate any announcement of, or comments on French tests, either before, during, or after shots. Should subject be raised, US spokesmen will not express explicit value judgment on fact that France is conducting nuclear tests in atmosphere. Specific guidelines for comments on French tests <sup>ARE</sup> ~~is~~ contained in following paragraph.

9. Guidelines for comment on French nuclear testing: if questions arise on 1974 French test series, and to extent that local developments require comment, either publicly or in official conversations, all US officials, civilian and military should observe the following guidelines:

OPTION 3

A. If specifically asked about US attitude toward French testing, US spokesmen will note that the GOF has stated that this year's tests are expected to be France's last above ground and will state that USG welcomes this announcement. If appropriate, US spokesmen may add that US has consistently urged all states that have not yet done so to adhere without further delay to the provisions of the Limited Test Ban Treaty of 1963 and has supported a UN expression of serious concern over the continuance of atmospheric testing. The following information may be cited in support of this statement: at

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the 27th United Nations General Assembly, the US supported a resolution, sponsored by a number of Pacific states, which, after expressing "serious concern" that atmospheric testing continued in some parts of the world, stressed urgency of halting "all atmospheric testing of nuclear weapons in the Pacific or anywhere else in the world." More recently, the USG joined Australia and New Zealand in ANZUS Communique of February 27, 1974, which "Noting the continued atmospheric testing of nuclear weapons in Asia and the Pacific...", called once again "for universal adherence to the Partial Nuclear Test Ban Treaty of 1963, to which all three ANZUS partners were parties."

OPTION 2 //

A. If specifically asked about US attitude toward French testing, US spokesmen will state that US has consistently urged all states that have not yet done so to adhere without further delay to the Limited Test Ban Treaty of 1963 and has supported a UN expression of serious concern over the continuance of atmospheric testing. The following information may be cited in support of this statement: At the 27th United Nations General Assembly, the US supported a resolution, sponsored by a number of Pacific states, which, after expressing "serious concern" that atmospheric testing continued in some parts of the world, stressed urgency of halting "all atmospheric testing of nuclear weapons in the Pacific or anywhere else in the world." More recently, the USG joined Australia and New Zealand in ANZUS Communique of February 27,

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1974, which "Noting the continued atmospheric testing of nuclear weapons in Asia and the Pacific....," called once again "for universal adherence to the Partial Nuclear Test Ban Treaty of 1963, to which all three ANZUS partners were parties."

B. If asked to comment on recent GOF announcement that this will be last year for French atmospheric testing, US spokesmen will say we have noted this statement but have no comment on it.

OPTION 1

A. Same as para A under Option 2.

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