

May 29, 1965

**Cable from the Chinese Foreign Ministry, 'Reactions
to China's Second Nuclear Test'**

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Summary:

Cable from the Chinese Foreign Ministry to Chinese Embassies noting foreign countries' responses to China's second nuclear test.

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Chinese

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Translation - English

Cable Sent by the [Chinese] Foreign Ministry
[...]

Reactions to China's Second Nuclear Test

To the various Embassies and Offices of the Charge d'Affaires,

Foreign Ministry Circular No. 79

The success of our second nuclear test has once again garnered widespread international attention, [causing] great shock waves and strong reactions. We are now attaching excerpts of the responses of various parties for your reference.

1. The public opinion of various countries gave very positive assessments of the significance of this test, and the positive assessments outnumbered the opposing views and attacks. When compared with the first explosion, reactions had significantly changed. It was widely felt that the choice of timing for this explosion had huge significance and greatly strengthened our position in relation to the situation in Vietnam, offering encouragement to the Vietnamese people in their fight against the United States and a major blow to the U.S. policy of invading Vietnam. It was felt that this test expanded our influence in the Asian and African regions, and will strengthen our position in the Asian-African Conference. It was felt that we had become a powerful countervailing force. The basis of American and Soviet cooperation will gradually be destroyed. Western and Japanese public opinion also spoke highly of our technical progress in this nuclear test.

2. What was striking about the official views of various countries was that friends were even happier and enemies were even more uneasy.

(i) The leaders of the United Arab Republic [Egypt], [North] Korea, and [North] Vietnam congratulated us warmly and their party newspapers had all published editorials. The Vietnamese had exceptionally strong reactions, and they stressed that this dealt a heavy blow to the American imperialists and gave huge support to Vietnam's anti-American struggle to save the country.

(ii) There were significant changes in the attitudes of the nationalist countries in Asia and Africa, and with the exception of Ceylon [Sri Lanka], all of them basically are approving. Their main response was that of pride in the Asian and African people acquiring nuclear weapons. They felt that this test supported anti-imperialism and anti-colonialism and was a very good response to the American imperialists. Many Asian and African people openly praised that Mao Zedong's thought and the power of the masses combined was invincible. The President of the Republic of the Congo refused to state his position the last time around, but this time around he said that our nuclear test boosted their confidence. The Central African Republic and the Republic of Dahomey did not declare their positions the last time around but this time around, the foreign ministers of both countries congratulated me. Countries such as Nepal, Laos, Iraq, Somali, Zambia, and Uganda had all expressed "regret" or attacked us the last time. This time around, they have not declared their stand. Among the countries that we have established diplomatic relations with, only Ceylon expressed regret. On the other hand, countries such as Indonesia, Tanzania, Mali, Algeria, and Guinea all reacted in a positive manner. Only the leaders of great powers did not openly make their positions known. The nationalist organizations of countries that have yet to gain independence were all very warm, and they also stressed that they wanted to engage in armed struggle.

(iii) The United States is doing its best to downplay the significance of this test, but the fact is that it is extremely uneasy. After our nuclear test, the American

government immediately issued McNamara's and Rusk's testimonies to Congress in March in succession, saying that the United States would be developing an anti-continental ballistic missile system in order to deal with a possible attack from us in one or two decades down the road, and claiming that the United States was "determined to protect its Asian friends from China's nuclear blackmail. Such actions were obviously aimed at counteracting the influence of our nuclear test and stabilizing its Asian followers. According to reports, after our nuclear test, the United States stepped up its "nuclear protection" activities for its Asian followers.

(iv) This time round, the Soviet Union is basically trying all ways and means to downplay our influence, but it did not dare to make a direct attack. Kosygin insinuated that manufacturing nuclear weapons would make "one poor and liable for all kinds of consequences." The revisionist countries in Eastern Europe published more objective reports this time around and there was no talk that attacked us directly [last year, Germany and Czech papers had issued commentaries attacking us]. The German papers had more publicity, and ten newspapers said that our development of nuclear weapons was for defense and never for first use.

(v) The Indonesian government and the newspapers of India and Yugoslavia had all attacked us and took the opportunity to foment anti-Chinese sentiments, but the effect was not as great as the last time. Of all the capitalist countries, only Japan lodged a "strong protest."

(vi) There was a change in the attitude of France. The French government and newspapers generally responded positively to our last test. They felt that we had broken the American and Soviet monopoly and was a positive factor in the international system. This time around, they showed feelings of unease toward our technological progress and were worried that France's power would be weakened in relative terms. At the same time, they stressed our big power status and influence.

(viii) The reactions of the Western European countries were a lot less vigorous as compared to the previous time. There was significantly less anti-China rhetoric and actions.

Foreign Ministry
29 May 1965

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