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UNITED STATES INFORMATION AGENCY
WASHINGTON

407140

November 6, 1956



MEMORANDUM

TO:	OCB - Mr. Staats	White House - Mr. Jackson
	CIA - Mr. Egner	Disarmament Staff - Mr. Lippmann
	ICA - Mr. Tobler	Atomic Energy Commission - Mr. McGruder
	State - Mr. Richards	
	Defense - Mr. Wyeth	

SUBJECT: Reaction to U.S. Domestic Debate Over Ending H-Bomb Tests

At the OCB Luncheon Meeting on October 17, 1956 the above subject was discussed. USIA was requested to prepare a brief report on overseas reaction.

Attached is a report for your use and for the information of your principal who attends OCB luncheon meetings. If more specific information is desired I can provide it from the raw material available in my office.

F.O.B.
Frederic O. Bundy
Board Assistant

Attachment: (1)
2-page above named report.

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(File #5)(5) [Aug 1956-Jan 1957]



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REACTION TO U. S. DOMESTIC DEBATE
OVER ENDING H-BOMB TESTS



On the basis of responses received so far to a telegraphic query to certain major field posts and other information available, reaction in non-Communist areas to the domestic United States debate on ending H-bomb tests appears to have been moderate. News coverage, in most instances, was widespread but not heavy. Interest in the issue seems to have been divided between an interest, on the one hand, in the actual subject of the debate and concern over the testing issue, and, on the other, interest in the issue as an aspect of the United States election. Editorial comment was moderate in volume and, except for the communist and left-wing press, generally restrained in tone. The news coverage was only occasionally sensational in tone - - and this more often in its treatment of the issue as an element in United States election developments than in its treatment of testing and related problems.

The Stevenson position commanded more support and sympathy among commentators than did President Eisenhower's position. While there was considerable speculation on the role the issue might play in affecting the results of the election, no consensus emerges clearly; there appears to be a tendency to discount the decisiveness of testing as an election issue.

The Dulganin-Eisenhower exchange received in general similar coverage and here a stronger note of approval of the President's course seems detectable.

Little information is as yet available on Near Eastern and Far Eastern reaction, but in those areas reaction seems to be based on continuing concern over the effects of tests and less on interest in the U.S. election.

SOVIET AND SATELLITES

The possibility of a ban of nuclear weapons tests was frequently discussed by Soviet commentators. According to Moscow propagandists, bomb-test ban discussions have now become the center of attention in the U.S. election campaign. As in past comments on this topic, Soviet media indicated that the test ban issue has been introduced into campaign oratory primarily because the Democrats have found it

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expedient to utilize popular demands for disarmament and because the Republicans had to take a stand once the issue had become campaign ammunition. Even though Moscow maintained that Stevenson's proposal for a test ban was getting increasing popular and scientific support in America, it said that he and his strategists are using the issue primarily in a quest for votes. As envisaged by Communist commentators, the Administration has now been caught between the need to attract voters to its side and the need for continuing the arms race. Moscow called the test issue one of the most vulnerable points of Republican policy. Radio comments underlined "the tremendous public interest in test cessation both in America and in the world at large."

COMMUNIST CHINA

Communist China has treated the subject in ways that support the Soviet stand on disarmament and atomic weapons and has sought to exploit Eisenhower's position largely to prove that the United States is unwilling to undertake disarmament and is ignoring the hazards of nuclear war and nuclear tests, and public opinion. At the same time, both the Soviet and Communist Chinese exploitation of the issue make the point that the current U.S. discussion is a concession to the concern of the U.S. public over the issue which has demanded a discussion in the course of the election campaign.
