

Debate on New Atom Tests Splits Top U. S. Officials

Powerful Forces on Both Sides Seek to Persuade Kennedy, Who Must Decide Whether to Resume Aerial Shots

By HANSON W. BALDWIN

A bitter behind-the-scenes struggle about the resumption of atmospheric nuclear tests is being fought in Washington.

President Kennedy has ordered necessary preparations made that would permit testing, presumably this spring, off Hawaii, at Johnston Island and perhaps at British-owned Christmas Island. But he has reserved final decision, and the capital is riven by a great debate between opponents of resumed testing and proponents of it.

Scientists, members of the White House executive staff, the State Department, the United States Information Agency, the Pentagon and the Central Intelligence Agency and particularly its new chief, John A. McCone, have become

directly or indirectly. Feeling is high on both

Opponents of atmospheric tests describe them as unnecessary or unduly provocative to world public opinion or both. Some military men believe resumed testing is almost vital to the future security of his nation.

The Atomic Energy Commission's announcement Friday of a Soviet underground test is expected to hasten the ultimate decision on American testing.

Preparations for the tests are continuing while the debate rages. Joint Task Force Eight, under its field commander, Maj. Gen. Alfred D. Starbird, is being formed, and ships, planes and men assigned to their duties.

A total of more than \$80,000,000 is earmarked for the task force, and a program of tests, to start apparently in early spring and to continue

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ATOM TESTS IN AIR: THE GREAT DEBATE

Feeling High as Both Sides Await Kennedy Decision

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possibly into early summer, is being drawn up. But the final "Go" or "No-Go" signal has not been given by the President.

Powerful forces on both sides have presented their views to the President and are still urging their respective viewpoints.

Opposed to the resumption of testing are many scientists, including the President's scientific adviser, Dr. Jerome B. Wiesner; Adlai E. Stevenson, chief United States delegate to the United Nations; the State Department; the United States Information Agency; and apparently most of the President's special assistants in the White House.

In favor of resumption of testing are many scientists, including Dr. Edward Teller, the atomic physicist; the Joint Chiefs of Staff and most of the military services; the Atomic Energy Commission (with limitations); powerful members of the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy, and Mr. McCone.

Importance of Issues

The arguments reflect the importance of the issues involved in the decision of the President. The opponents of testing insist that renewed atmospheric tests are technically unnecessary, despite the great evidence of Russian progress; and that test resumptions would offend world public opinion and would imperil all attempts to halt the arms race.

The opponents also view with alarm the addition of any more radioactive fall-out to the atmosphere. They describe the resumption of atmospheric testing as "immoral."

Those opposed to above-the-ground testing are well organized and vocal. They have already staged a number of demonstrations in Washington, New York, the United Nations headquarters in New York and elsewhere.

Proponents declare that an analysis of the Soviet series of more than fifty tests shows tremendous scientific, technological and weapons progress, and that unless the United States resumes atmospheric tests soon its past advantage in nuclear weapons and in delivery capabilities may be neutralized or overcome and its security imperiled. They add that nuclear tests can lead to new and unknown developments.

Personal and emotional factors have added to the heat of the debate.

The more than fifty tests of all types the Russians conducted last fall have become a powerful, though apparently not yet a conclusive, argument for the resumption of atmospheric testing. An analysis of the Soviet tests was made by a committee of scientists, headed by Dr. Hans A. Bethe of Cornell University.

Evaluation by McCone

Later, another evaluation was presented by Mr. McCone, who was sworn in last Nov. 29 and who was confirmed Wednesday as director of the Central Intelligence Agency.

The C. I. A. presentation apparently viewed the Soviet progress in considerably stronger terms than did the earlier scientific analysis, although both were impressed with the evident nuclear progress made by the Russians.

The Soviet tests showed, according to most experts:

—Tremendous laboratory progress in the more than three years of test cessation.

—Considerable progress in the development of a warhead for an anti-ballistic missile.

—Major development of lighter and more compact weapons. The Soviet yield-to-weight ratio — the packaging of high power into smaller and lighter weapons — is now adjudged to be about equal to the United States'. This is of high importance in the development of second and third generation missiles. The tests indicated considerable Soviet progress toward the development of compact, solid-fueled missiles like the Minuteman, and hence an increase in missile striking power and a reduction in vulnerability.

—Major progress in development of a whole family of new nuclear weapons — both tactical and strategic.

—Reduction of the amount of fissionable material Approved trigger a fusion reaction. The biggest Soviet test detonation, which was calculated at a yield of more than fifty-five megatons, released a far smaller amount of fission products into the atmosphere than the United States had anticipated. More fusion and less fission in a weapon could mean in time not only more but also cheaper weapons, since fusion materials are far less expensive and more plentiful than fissionable ones.

Doubts on U. S. Lead

In short, the Russian tests appear to sum up to a conclusion by most well-informed officials that the United States no longer has assurance that it has a major technological lead in atomic weapons.

Some military men are further worried by some evidence of Soviet rocket achievements that the United States has not yet matched. The United States believes that it is still ahead of the Soviet Union in numbers of intercontinental ballistic missiles.

But the Russians have far more missiles of 700-mile to 1,100-mile range, capable of striking American allies and overseas bases. And they have apparently fired salvos of as

many as ten to twenty of these missiles in tests, something the United States has never done, and which it is not equipped to do.

The proponents of the resumption of atmospheric nuclear testing base their arguments in large part upon these evidences of Soviet progress. They hold that underground tests are limited to small explosions and are too slow, too expensive and too difficult to instrument and that some of the most important weapons effects cannot be studied except by atmospheric tests.

The United States has resumed underground testing since the Russians resumed testing and has exploded underground in Nevada a total of about fifteen small-yield devices. Not all of these have been announced. At least one of the devices tested was a small Army tactical weapon for battlefield use.

2 Ancillary Debates

Involved in the major debate about nuclear testing are two ancillary debates.

One revolves around Mr. McCone, former chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission. Mr. McCone, as director of the A. E. C., took a firm stand in favor of nuclear testing. The C. I. A. is not a policy-making agency, but Mr. McCone made it clear to Senator Richard B. Russell, chairman of the Armed Services Committee, in connection with his confirmation hearings, that he would not "volunteer" opinions as a policy, but if asked, he would "feel free" to give his "personal views."

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high importance of resuming nuclear testing have not changed. Moreover, many in the academic and scientific community, who oppose him on the nuclear test issue, regard Mr. McCone as biased and "unjudicious." Dr. George T. Kistiakowsky of Harvard University, former science adviser to President Eisenhower, headed a group to the White House that opposed Mr. McCone's appointment as C.I.A. director.

Others who opposed Mr. McCone from political life contended that his business connections led to conflicts of interests. Some of the younger Democratic liberals, including some close to the President, were also said to be opposed to Mr. McCone because his political philosophy was far more conservative than theirs.

Bitter Opposition

These forces, focused by the nuclear test issue, led to some bitter but ineffective opposition to the McCone appointment. What some officials describe as the most severe press attacks upon any official since those launched upon the late James Forrestal, first Secretary of Defense, were published by one columnist. But Mr. McCone had powerful bipartisan support in Congress, particularly in the Joint Atomic Energy Committee.

Senator Henry M. Jackson, Democrat of Washington, a member of both the Armed Services and Atomic Energy Committees, and a strong supporter both of Mr. McCone and of the resumption of atmospheric tests, noted during the confirmation debate that some of those who opposed the new C. I. A. director did so "because of his hard, tough policy toward the Soviet Union, particularly on nuclear testing."

With Mr. McCone's confirmation, this phase of the behind-the-scenes struggle is now centered on a selection of a deputy director of the Central Intelligence Agency, a Presidential appointment. The law does not require the deputy to be a military man, but it does require either the director or the deputy to be a civilian.

Military Appointees

Both the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Senate Armed Services Committee have urged a military man.

The recommendations of the Joint Chiefs of Staff include the names of Lieut. Gen. William W. Quinn, Deputy Director of the Defense Intelligence Agency; Lieut. Gen. Arthur G. Trudeau, Chief of Research and Development, and Vice Admiral Charles E. Martell, Deputy Director of Research and Engineering.

White House sources, however, have suggested a civilian deputy (unnamed) or the ap-

pointment of the President's military aide, Maj. Gen. Chester V. Clifton.

None of the names suggested have been accepted as yet by Mr. McCone, who is believed to favor a top-notch military man in his early fifties who would devote the rest of his career to the C. I. A. Three names speculatively mentioned as suitable, by Mr. McCone's yardstick, for the job are those of Vice Admiral John T. Hayward, Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Development; General Starbird, field commander of the task force preparing for tests, or Maj. Gen. Andrew J. Goodpastor, one of former President Dwight D. Eisenhower's White House aides, now Commander of the Eighth Infantry Division in Germany.

Studying Agency

Still another, whose name has been mentioned as a possibility is Gen. Cortlandt Van Rensselaer Schuyler, retired, who has been an executive assistant to Governor Rockefeller but who is now a member of an organization committee appointed by Mr. McCone that is studying the Central Intelligence Agency.

Thus Mr. McCone's own appointment to the C. I. A. and the appointment of a deputy have become involved directly and indirectly in the broad issue of nuclear testing.

Another part of the debate is how much and what to test. Many of the scientists who believe resumption of testing is necessary would like to limit the tests to developmental and experimental ones, and would exclude as technologically and militarily unnecessary the tests of existing nuclear weapons, or any operational tests by the military.

Dr. Glenn T. Seaborg, chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, took this position last year in a recommendation to the President, and apparently other members of the A.E.C. agree with him. However some scientists in the A.E.C. disagree. In fact, there is a split on this issue both in the scientific community and in the military. The Joint Chiefs of Staff were unanimously in favor last year of operational testing of many existing weapons and weapons systems, but some military men in the Pentagon and some civilian officials see no need for this. A Navy task force put to sea last fall to test for the first time a new warhead for an anti-submarine weapon, but the task force was recalled by the President before the test started.

The military point out that many of the existing weapons in the country's nuclear stockpile, including newest tactical weapons and missile warheads, have never been proof-tested.

that laboratory tests and the lessons learned in past nuclear testing make it almost certain that the new weapons will function as expected, but as one spokesman said, "I would certainly sleep better at night" if the major weapons were proof-tested.

The military also point out that only one out of the more than 170 tests conducted by the United States since World War II has been accomplished by the military who are expected to handle these weapons in time of war.

An Army crew fired a nuclear round from a 280-mm. gun at the proving ground in Nevada some years ago. All other tests have been under the Atomic Energy Commission auspices. Many of the military would like to include in any test program a series of operational detonations of existing weapons by military personnel.

However, the present guidelines for the tests would apparently limit them to experimental and developmental detonations and to compress them in number, in time, in total yield and in release of radioactivity. The tests would include sizable explosions at very high altitudes, which would be of importance in the development of an anti-ballistic missile and in determination of the effect of such explosions upon radar and radio.

Other Tests Planned

Other tests to develop improved safety devices and to reduce the size and weight of warheads are tentatively planned. The plans apparently contemplate the use of British-owned Christmas island for some observers believe that if the island is used, the Administration and the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy will have to interpret the atomic energy law liberally to allow the British to monitor and record test results.

At the moment the betting in Washington is that the President will allow preparations for the tests to continue but may defer or cancel them at the last moment. However, there is powerful support in the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy for resumed testing.

And three books — all scheduled to be published soon, and all expected to support a resumption of nuclear tests — may have considerable influence on public opinion. The authors are

man of the Atomic Energy Commission, Dr. Teller, Associate director of the E. O. Lawrence Radiation Laboratory at Berkeley, Calif., and Lieut. Gen. Leslie R. Groves, retired, who headed the Army's Manhattan project, which developed the atomic bomb during World War II.