

U.S. AIDES FORESEE CHINA ARMS FEAT

Orbiting of Satellite or ICBM Test in October Predicted

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WASHINGTON, June 29—Communist China may stage its next weapons "spectacular" the first week in October with a satellite launching or the firing of its first intercontinental ballistic missile, a top Administration weapons expert predicts.

Officials say the Chinese are preparing a small number of large, liquid-fuel rockets that could be employed to put a satellite into space or to propel a dummy warhead 4,000 to 5,000 miles into the Pacific Ocean.

The first test shot, they say, could come as soon as August or as late as next spring.

One specialist based his estimate of the October launch on a presumed Chinese desire to get the greatest propagandist value from the feat.

'Ideal Time to Show Off'

"The U.N. General Assembly should just have returned and will likely be arguing about the admission of China at about that time," he said. "And the Russians will be celebrating with parades and proud speeches, the October Revolution that brought them to power. That would be an ideal time for China to show off its growing power." Peking will also mark the 18th anniversary of its take-over of the Chinese mainland Oct. 1.

The experts differ on whether the Chinese will want to loft a satellite or ICBM first.

"The Chinese, if anything, bragged even more than the Russians about the Soviets' first Sputnik in October, 1957," one expert pointed out. "An orbiting satellite is visible, tangible evidence of scientific progress. The ordinary man can up and see it. And the scientists and military men realize that what could launch a satellite could also be used to carry a warhead."

A satellite launched from the Chinese testing ground near Lop Nor in the northwestern region of Sinkiang might be expected to pass generally over New York, Washington, St. Louis, Denver and San Francisco in the United States, a

Tracking Poses Problem

If the Chinese decide on an ICBM test first, to stress their fast pace toward Big-Power nuclear capability, it is expected that the rocket will be fired over the Pacific rather than the Indian Ocean, so that it will pass over a wider expanse of Chinese territory and facilitate tracking.

"Red China doesn't have large, sophisticated radar-tracking ships as we and the Russians do," a Defense analyst said. "They might want to keep their shot close to their own territory so they can get more useful data from it."

The experts estimate that an operational ICBM could be ready two to three years after the first test.