

Pro-Testing Crowd Gunning for Dr. Bethe; Scientists Protested to White House Against McCone

AEC Quickly Identifies New Russian Underground Test

New developments in the controversy over nuclear testing during the past week:

1. On Feb. 2 the Russians set off an underground explosion in central Asia in the region of Semipalatinsk. The AEC in Washington that afternoon announced the explosion, saying it "was well above the threshold of underground detectability by a single national system." "For background only, not for attribution" the size of the Soviet explosion was placed at from 20 to 100 kilotons. But the next day the Seismological Institute in Uppsala, Sweden, one of the world's best, said the explosion was only 10 kilotons. The AEC declined to comment on or explain the difference and few newspapers published the AP dispatch from Uppsala. We saw it only in the *Washington Evening Star*, Feb. 3. This was one more indication that long distance identification of underground shots is easier than we have been told.

That Lead Jacket

2. The Joint Committee on Atomic Energy is gunning for Dr. Hans Bethe and executive hearings were to be held February 7 and 8 to investigate whether he violated security by his talk at Cornell Jan. 5 (which we reported in our issue of Jan. 15). Dr. Bethe irked the pro-testing crowd by revealing that the relative cleanliness of the big Russian bomb explosion of Oct. 30 was due to its being encased in a lead jacket and not (as fed out by Dr. Teller to *Time Magazine* and the *New York Times*) to any new triggering device which supposedly brought the Soviets nearer to that "clean" neutron bomb.

3. In a long piece on the McCone and testing controversy in the *New York Times* Feb. 4 its military expert, Hanson W. Baldwin, disclosed that Dr. George T. Kistiakowsky of Harvard, former science adviser to President Eisenhower "headed a group to the White House that opposed Mr. McCone's appointment as CIA director. According to Mr. Baldwin, this reflected the feeling of "many in the academic and scientific community" who "regard Mr. McCone as biased and 'injurious' in his advocacy of resumed nuclear testing. Mr. Baldwin also disclosed that after the committee of scientists headed by Dr. Bethe made the report the White House had

AEC Now Dubious of Underground Testing

"Underground testing is limited to the lower yield devices (up to some tens of kilotons at present) and certain types of tests, particularly some effects tests [presumably the effects of the weapons on military targets—IFS], cannot be made in this way at all. Hence, steps were taken to prepare for a series of tests in the atmosphere in the event the President should decide to expand the test effort in this way.

"While important development information with respect to nuclear weapons designs was discovered in the course of the underground tests, these tests also revealed that testing underground is a slower and more expensive process than had previously been assumed. It has proved to be more difficult to diagnose some of the results of development tests; operational difficulties such as post-shot re-entry and re-use of partially contaminated tunnels were continuing factors in delaying the test program."

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requested of them on the results of Soviet testing, Mr. McCone presented another evaluation which "apparently viewed the Soviet progress in considerably stronger terms than did the earlier scientific analysis." Who said Mr. McCone would take no hand in policy formation? And what has happened to the atmosphere of free debate when scientists are afraid to oppose a CIA appointment publicly?

Total letters to the President in our anti-testing campaign as of Feb. 7 was 1937, keep them coming.

* With respectful salute we record the 12 Senators who voted against, and the three who were paired against, the McCone confirmation: Burdick (D. N.Dak.), Byrd (D. W.Va.), Case (R. S. Dak.), Fulbright (D. Ark.), Gruening (D. Alaska), Lausche (D. Ohio), McCarthy (D. Minn.), Metcalf (D. Mont.), Neuberger (D. Ore.), Proxmire (D. Wis.), Smith (R. Me.) and Young (D. Ohio). Morse (D. Ore.), Douglas (D. Ill.) and Clark (D. Pa.) were paired against the nomination. We would also pay tribute to Drew Pearson whose columns did so much to awaken the Senate and the public to the issue.

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