

October 30, 1950

## Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSE

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At three thirty this morning, the Soviet Union detonated a very large nuclear device. Preliminary evidence indicates that its magnitude is on the order of 50 megatons. The explosion took place in the atmosphere. It will produce more radioactive fallout than any previous explosion.

The Soviet explosion was a political rather than a military act. The device exploded does not add in effectiveness against military targets to nuclear weapons now available both to the Soviet Union and the United States. It does not affect the basic balance of nuclear power. Any such weapon would be primarily a mass killer of people in war -- and the testing of this device primarily an incitement to fright and panic in the cold war.

In undertaking this test, the Soviet Union has deliberately overridden the expressed hope of the world as stated in the resolution adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on October 26. It has done so because it intends through this display to spread such fear across the world that peace-loving men will accept any Soviet demand. Fear is the oldest weapon in history. Throughout the life of mankind, it has been the resort of those who could not hope to prevail by reason and persuasion. It will be repelled today, as it has been repelled in the past -- not only by the steadfastness of free men but by the power of the arms which men will use to defend their freedom.

There is no mystery about producing a 50 megaton bomb. Nor is there any technical need for testing such a weapon at full-scale detonation in order to confirm the basic design. The United States Government considered this matter carefully several years ago and concluded that such weapons would not provide an essential military capability. The existing United States nuclear arsenal is superior in quantity and quality to that of any other nation. The United States today has ample military power to destroy any nation which would unleash thermonuclear war.

We have no wish ever to use this military power. We are ready, now as ever, to sign the test-ban treaty proposed at Geneva. We are ready, now as ever, to negotiate a treaty for general and complete disarmament. In the meantime, we will continue to take whatever measures are necessary to preserve the security of our country and of others who count on us.

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