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OPTIONAL FORM NO. 10

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

EUR-FDR
SECRET

Handwritten notes and signatures:
DATE: November 25, 1960
to receive dep.
Chapman
AD

TO : SOV - Mr. John A. Armitage

FROM : INR:RSB - Charles C. Flowerree *CCF*

SUBJECT: Warsaw Report on Chinese Nuclear Weapons Activities

In reference to Warsaw's 791 of November 21, the following information could be conveyed to appropriate foreign diplomatic personnel in Warsaw.

It is true that the Chinese Communists have built three atomic reactors. One of these, which has a power output of 7-10 MW, was supplied by the Soviets. There are two other known Chinese reactors of 2 MW capacity each and the existence of a third 2 MW reactor is suspected. All of these reactors are designed for research. They could be converted to the production of plutonium but their combined output, even over a long period, would be insufficient to support even an experimental weapons program. If the Chinese are embarking on a nuclear weapons development program, they will not use any of the reactors known to have been built for peaceful purposes, but will construct special facilities for the production of fissionable materials.

Handwritten notes:
1.3.4

For your information, the intelligence community has recently re-examined available evidence on Chinese progress toward a nuclear capability and has reaffirmed its estimate that 1963 is the most likely date for the completion of a first Chinese nuclear device. This estimate is, of course, affected by a number of factors which cannot now be predicted. The most important of these is the scale and pace of Soviet assistance to the Chinese in the atomic energy field. This assistance has been considerable in the past, but there is good reason to believe that the current political dissensions have caused a severe cut back in Soviet aid which could stall the Chinese nuclear weapons program for some time. There is little doubt, however, that the Chinese have attained a competence in atomic energy which would enable them eventually to produce a weapon of their own, even with no further Soviet assistance.

Regarding the alleged atomic explosion in the Gobi desert region, to date intelligence has received no evidence which would lead to the conclusion that an atomic explosion has occurred anywhere in Communist China.

INR:RSB:CCFlowerree:jkm

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