

few weeks, first at a series of meetings in Brussels at the end of this month by the Association of South East Asian Nations, and then on the occasion of the August 6 and 9 anniversaries of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The Bosnian crisis does not appear to have contributed to the decline in Mr. Chirac's popularity.

But it was noteworthy yesterday that prime minister Alain Juppe, whose remit is mainly domestic policy, fared far better in the Ifop poll than his president. His "satisfaction" rating fell from 55 to 51 per cent over this past month.

A PENTAGON SHELL GAME WITH EVERYTHING TO LOSE

(By Frank von Hippel)

Around the world, expressions of outrage have greeted French President Jacques Chirac's decision to carry out major nuclear weapons tests—some perhaps as large as 100,000 tons TNT equivalent—in the South Pacific this winter. France characterizes the tests as the "last" before a comprehensive test ban is signed next year. Little attention, however, has been paid to France's determination to conduct powerful "small" tests—100 or 200 tons TNT-equivalent—forever.

This would be a perfect time for the United States to urge Chirac to reconsider this position. Unfortunately, the Clinton Administration is not doing so. Instead, its attention is focused on a Pentagon proposal to leapfrog the French position and require that the comprehensive test ban allow tests with even larger yields.

A test ban that allowed tests with yields of hundreds of tons would create an opening for efforts to develop "usable" "micro-nukes" and "mini-nukes." It would therefore be seen as a fraud by virtually all of the 170 non-nuclear states that agreed this spring to an indefinite extension of the Non-Proliferation Treaty after receiving a commitment that the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty would be signed next year.

The Pentagon, like the French military, argues that it will lose confidence that its weapons will retain their destructive power if it cannot see their fission triggers tested now and then at partial yield. Lack of confidence is a psychological state, however, in this case largely self-inflicted by the Pentagon's requirement that the power of warheads be guaranteed to within a margin for which there is no military justification. Any objective assessment of the record of more than 1,000 U.S. nuclear tests would give great confidence that the immense destructive power of the current stockpile can be maintained without detonation tests. This confidence extends to faithful copies of these weapons if it becomes necessary to remanufacture them.

Those arguing the contrary position often ask rhetorically, "Would you expect your car to work if you stored it for 20 years without testing?" Of course not, but the analogy is misleading. A nuclear warhead "works" only one time. Still, if you supported multibillion-dollar laboratories to test the components of your car under stressful conditions, adjusting and replacing them as necessary, would it work? You bet it would.

The functioning of nuclear warheads is also checked by replacing the plutonium with an inert simulant and then using a powerful X-ray machine to verify that it implodes into a configuration that would produce a nuclear explosion of the desired yield. All of our nuclear weapons have been designed with these and other sophisticated implosion tests before actual testing. As a result, the nuclear tests were successful with remarkably few exceptions.

Test ban opponents have made much of the few cases where there were surprises in tests of new warhead designs. But in every case, a new feature—for example, a new type of chemical explosive—had been introduced whose performance was known by the designers to be questionable under some conditions. Such problems have little relevance to the well-tested designs in the enduring stockpile.

To the argument that use of a new plastic or a change in the technique used to manufacture plutonium components might degrade the performance of the warheads, we would respond, "Don't fiddle with them." At the same time, experience has shown that the designs are robust enough to tolerate the inevitable minor changes that would occur in remanufacture. There were more differences between the warheads in the stockpile and the prototypes made by the nuclear-weapons laboratories than there would be with future remanufactured warheads. Yet both worked.

Based on U.S. experience, the objective value of "reliability" tests is negligible in comparison with the cost of renegeing on the deal with the non-weapons state, which promises that we will all work together against the spread and to reduce the numbers of these terrible devices. President Clinton should reject the demands of those who would test forever and should urge President Chirac to do the same.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1555, THE COMMUNICATIONS ACT OF 1995

Mr. LINDER, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 104-223) on the resolution (H. Res. 207) providing for consideration of the Communications Act of 1995, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

□ 1845

UNITED STATES-RUSSIAN JOINT EFFORTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. METCALF). Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. WELDON] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I will not take the entire hour, but rise this evening to focus on an issue that will be heavily discussed tomorrow and later this week as we vote on the next fiscal year Defense appropriation bill.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is important that we approach defense spending in this day and age with a very cautious eye to what is happening, not just in the Soviet Union, but around the world. To that extent, I will be entering some documents into the RECORD this evening. I think Members should especially focus on, not just for the votes that will occur tomorrow and the rest of the week, but also for debate that we will be having further on in this session of Congress, during the conference process and as we begin to debate the relative importance of continuing within the confines of the ABM Treaty.

First of all, Mr. Speaker, let me say I rise as a 9-year member of the National Security Committee and the current chairman of the Research and Development Subcommittee, and as someone who is not just a self-proclaimed hardliner when it comes to dealing with the former Soviet Union and now Russia, as well as those rogue nations around the world, but as someone who spent the bulk of my last 20 years working on building bridges with the Russian people.

My approach to Russia is one of pragmatism. Reach out to the Russian people, work with them, build relationships on trust and mutual cooperation, but hold them accountable when they violate treaties on defense and foreign policy issues.

My background is in Russian studies, my undergraduate degree is in that area. Twenty years ago I spoke the language fluently. I have traveled throughout the country, stayed in Russian people's homes, and I have this year hosted well over 100 members of the Duma in various meetings and sessions.

Mr. Speaker, currently I am the cochair of the Russian-American Energy Caucus with my colleagues, the gentleman from Texas, GREG LAUGHLIN, on the Republican side, and the gentleman from Maryland, STENY HOYER, and the gentleman from Illinois, GLENN POSHARD, on the Democratic side. Working with the 16 multinational energy corporations, we attempt to foster relationships that build bridges between our energy corporations and joint venture opportunities in Russia to allow them to bring in the hard currency they need. Most recently, this past year, we worked with our administration and the Yeltsin administration and members of the Duma to complete the final support and approval within the Duma for the Sakhalin project, a project that is in fact the largest energy project in the history of not just Russia, but the entire world, that will ultimately see approximately \$10 to \$15 billion of western investment through companies like McDermott Marathon go into the Sakhalin area for development of Russian energy resources.

Mr. Speaker, we are also working on the Caspian Sea project, which we hope will provide a force to unify some of the warring factions down in the Caspian Sea area, and also further help stabilize the Russian economy through development of their energy resources.

Mr. Speaker, I also cochair an effort working with the Duma members on environmental issues. Just last year I led a delegation of Members to Murmansk, the North Sea fleet, to talk about how we could work with them in finding ways of disposing of the Russian nuclear waste that is coming from the dismantlement of their ships and their submarines, as well as to try to help the Russians stop what has been a recurring practice over the past two decades of dumping nuclear reactors