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INDIA: [REDACTED]

The detonation occurred at a depth of slightly more than 100 meters and was completely contained, according to the chairman of India's Atomic Energy Commission, Dr. H. N. Sethna. Indian scientists who made an aerial survey over the area within 30 minutes of the blast reportedly detected no significant radioactivity.

Dr. Sethna also claimed that the device was developed entirely by India and that all components, including the plutonium, were produced locally. The device reportedly utilized the "implosion" technique, a more sophisticated approach than the "gun assembly" method used by the US in the bomb dropped on Hiroshima.

Dr. Sethna was noncommittal when asked if any more tests were planned. The New Delhi press, however, reported yesterday that a series of nuclear explosions will be carried out. No program was disclosed, but Indian officials are said to have stated that the purpose would be to develop atomic devices for use in mining, canal construction, and deepening and widening of ports. They deny any intention to produce nuclear weapons, but there undoubtedly will be strong pressures on the government to develop a military capability.

India probably for a number of years has had the technical ability and sufficient weapons-grade plutonium to detonate a nuclear device.

The decision to go ahead at this time probably was made in order to boost India's sagging international prestige and to divert public attention from the government's mounting domestic problems. The

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Indian press has responded to the test with an outburst of enthusiasm and national pride.

In a hard-hitting public statement, Pakistani Prime Minister Bhutto insisted that Pakistan would never be intimidated by the threat created by India's nuclear capability. He said that Pakistan would attempt to secure political assurances against India's use of such a nuclear threat and that the foreign secretary was being sent to China, France, and the UK, while he himself would raise the matter with Soviet leaders and with officials in Canada. The minister of state for foreign affairs and defense has been instructed to raise the issue at the CENTO meeting in Washington and with US officials. Bhutto added that conclusion of a no-war pact, proposed by India in 1971, is out of the question now because such a pact would amount to capitulation to blackmail.

Peking's initial reaction was a terse, factual announcement broadcast by the New China News Agency's domestic service some 24 hours after the test. Chinese spokesmen have thus far refused to make any comment to the press.

China has much to sort out in formulating a substantive response. Peking has consistently maintained that its own nuclear capability is purely defensive and is aimed solely at breaking the nuclear monopoly of the "superpowers." The Chinese have opposed nuclear arms limitations proposals, particularly the 1968 Non-Proliferation Treaty, on the grounds that they contribute to this monopoly. Peking has refused, for example, to take a stand against France's development of independent nuclear capabilities, pending an international agreement banning all nuclear weapons.

The Indian test, however, has direct security implications for China. Peking has long looked on New Delhi as a rival in Asia, and relations between

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the two cooled even further after India became a Soviet treaty partner in 1971.

The Soviet news agency Tass called the test a "peaceful explosion" and said India was "striving to keep up with world technology in the peaceful uses of nuclear explosions."

The Japanese predictably are showing dismay. Tokyo papers have denounced the test, which the Japanese are likely to view as an unsettling factor in Asian affairs.

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