

the Northern Mariana Islands, Mr. Juan N. Babauta, and his staff. I also commend the unity of purpose in the leadership of the Northern Marianas expressed by senate joint resolution No. 9-6 of the Ninth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature, the majors of Saipan, Tinian, Rota, and the Northern Islands, and the municipal councils of Saipan, Tinian, Rota in the adoption of resolutions requesting the U.S. Congress to grant delegate status to the resident Representative to the United States. I further commend the leadership of the Hon. Jesus R. Sablan, president of the Senate of the 10th Commonwealth Legislature and the Hon. Crispin I. Deleon Guerrero in their support of this bill. I hope that the House of Representatives and the Senate will act on this legislation in this session, and I urge my colleagues to cosponsor the Northern Marianas Delegate Act.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. UNDERWOOD. I yield to the gentleman from American Samoa.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the gentleman from Guam for being the chief sponsor of this important legislation. I think it is not only long overdue but, as the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Native Americans and Insular Affairs, I think it is most needful that the Congress should address this very important issue of true representation by our fellow American citizens that live in the Northern Marianas. I would like to ask the gentleman for just a couple of responses to one question that I have.

I think it is needful that the American people need to know how important these islands were in World War II, even at this point in time. The fact that this covenant that was signed between the leaders and the people of the Northern Marianas and the United States Government still to this day holds a very important strategic importance to our security interests in that part of the world. I would ask the gentleman if this is still true.

Mr. UNDERWOOD. Absolutely. As a matter of fact, Saipan, which is the principal island, is most identified to the people of this Nation as a battleground but, of course, their importance continued dramatically even after World War II, serving as a CIA base and providing military support for a number of years.

FRENCH NUCLEAR TESTING IS LEAKING RADIOACTIVITY INTO SOUTH PACIFIC

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from American Samoa [Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, since September of last year, France has resumed detonating nuclear bombs in coral atolls in the South Pacific, de-

fying worldwide protests against this crime against nature and against the lives and welfare of some 27 million men, women, and children who live in the Pacific region.

In deciding to resume nuclear testing, the French President Jacques Chirac promised the international community there would be no environmental consequences from their nuclear tests, as radioactive substances would not be discharged into the ocean and the surrounding areas.

Mr. Speaker, despite the intense fears of millions of residents in the Pacific, France's nuclear bomb detonations over the past 30 years are laying the foundation for a major environmental tragedy like Chernobyl. The French Atomic Energy Agency has repeatedly stated that radioactive substances from their nuclear tests are trapped in the ground and there is no danger of radioactive contamination.

Yesterday, France's big lie was revealed.

After a Japanese newspaper broke the story yesterday, media reports confirm that France now acknowledges that radioactive materials have, indeed, leaked into the sea from their recent nuclear tests at Moruroa Atoll. Radioactive iodine-131, which is created by nuclear explosions and causes cancer in humans, was detected by French officials after the tests but was apparently covered up. Only after a French nuclear specialist mistakenly revealed the information during a disarmament conference held right here in Washington last November—that the radioactive leakage was brought to light.

Mr. Speaker, this just confirms what we all know. The French Government cannot be trusted to tell the truth. One wonders what other monstrosities they have been hiding in the name of national interest.

Although the French routinely deny that their nuclear tests threaten the health and safety of Pacific residents or endanger the region's fragile marine environment, documents from France's Atomic Energy Commission confirm that at least three tests in the past have also led to radioactive contamination at Moruroa Atoll. Scientific missions to Moruroa—although severely restricted by French authorities in to their access to test sites, test data and time for study—have verified the presence of radioactive isotopes such as iodine-131, cesium-134, tritium, krypton-85, and plutonium. The presence of these radioactive materials substantiate fears that leakage, venting, and accidental dispersal of radioactive materials have occurred at France's test facilities in the two island atolls in the Pacific.

Despite France's assurances to the contrary, these reports and the events of yesterday confirm that France's underground testing program cannot ensure that radioactive contamination is fully contained.

While France's Defense Minister and Foreign Minister denounce accounts

that Moruroa Atoll has suffered deep cracks and fissuring from the nuclear testing, a confidential French Defense Ministry study directly contradicts them. As reported in today's Washington Post,

The French Government has been aware, at least since 1979, that Moruroa's underwater basalt foundation is fractured in several places.

The report described the effects of an accident in 1979 in which the French detonated a 150-kiloton weapon only 1,300 feet below the surface of the lagoon. The blast was supposed to occur at 2,600 feet, but the bomb got stuck halfway down the test shaft, and the French detonated it there rather than risk trying to move it. The explosion blasted loose more than 130 million cubic yards of rock and coral, causing a tidal wave that injured several French scientists and guards. The document also described underwater avalanches that followed three tests as proof the growing number of tests was posing serious environmental risks to Mururoa Atoll.

Mr. Speaker, with French President Chirac expected in Washington next week, I would ask our colleagues to join me in urging that the French Government stop this madness and immediately cease nuclear testing in the South Pacific.

Mr. Speaker, I've said it earlier and I'll say it again—the French Government has already exploded some 177 nuclear bombs in this atoll in the Pacific, and Prime Minister John Major of Great Britain and our own President have given only lip service to these acts of atrocity against the marine environment and against the lives of human beings who live in that part of the world.

Mr. Speaker, I include for the RECORD the following information:

RADIOACTIVE LEAK FOUND AT FRANCE'S MURUROA

TOKYO (Reuters)—A Japanese newspaper said on Tuesday that France had detected a toxic radioactive substance near Mururoa Atoll in the South Pacific after resuming nuclear testing there last September.

Yomiuri Shimbun, quoting unnamed sources close to the Geneva Conference on Disarmament, said the radioactive substance called "Iodine 131" was detected near Mururoa Atoll.

The sources said a specialist from the French Nuclear Energy Agency disclosed the radiation leakage at an unofficial meeting in Washington last November of experts from prospective signatories of a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

The French expert, however, did not make it clear exactly when the radioactive substance was detected.

After making the disclosure, the French expert asked the other participants to "forget what they had just heard," saying the data was "extremely confidential," the sources were quoted as saying.

Quoting one source close to the Washington meeting, Yomiuri said the radiation level of the substance was so low that it would not harm humans.

But when Iodine 131, commonly detected after frequent nuclear tests, is taken into the human body, it could cause cancer, Yomiuri said.

France has defied worldwide protests and conducted five nuclear weapons tests in the South Pacific since last September.

CLINTON URGES ACTION ON NUCLEAR TREATY
(By Stephanie Nebhehay)

GENEVA (Reuter)—President Clinton pressed Tuesday for a quick resolution to talks on an underground nuclear test ban treaty so the text could go to the U.N. General Assembly by June but India demanded nuclear powers first give assurances to eliminate nuclear weapons, Clinton said.

But the Group of 21 countries, which includes nuclear "threshold" states India and Pakistan, criticized the major powers for refusing to open new negotiations on a nuclear disarmament treaty to eliminate nuclear weapons.

The 38-state negotiations, sponsored by the United Nations, were overshadowed last year by France staging five underground nuclear tests in the South Pacific, and two blasts by China.

"A Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) is vital to constrain both the spread and further development of nuclear weapons," Clinton said in a message read by John Holum, director of the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency.

"Now, urgent national political decisions must complement your painstaking work in Geneva, so that the Conference can forward a completed Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty to the U.N. General Assembly by June."

In New Delhi, Foreign Ministry spokesman Arif Khan told reporters India's conditions to support the CTBT were unchanged despite Western pressure.

He said India's stand was clearly stated in Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao's address to the recent summit of non-aligned countries.

India exploded a nuclear device in 1974 but says its nuclear program is peaceful. It declined to sign the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty last year, saying the pact discriminated against non-nuclear powers.

"A handful of nations perpetuated their monopoly over the means of mutually assured destruction by the indefinite extension of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty," Rao told the non-aligned summit.

"They did so without even obtaining an expression of intent to eventually abolish all nuclear weapons as envisaged in that treaty itself."

India says it wants both the CTBT and a proposed convention on the cut-off of fissile material for weapons.

"While the aim of both these treaties are laudable, and we support them wholeheartedly, we must ensure that we do not lose yet another opportunity to obtain a commitment to universal and comprehensive nuclear disarmament," Rao said.

But Holum told a news briefing in Geneva that Clinton's message "made clear that this is a very high priority commitment of the United States. We are dedicated to completion of the test ban on time. We believe that will happen."

Holum, noting some states wanted to link the CTBT to a timetable for totally eliminating nuclear weapons, warned in his speech: "...I must acknowledge that the CTBT is at risk here in Geneva."

He said it was imperative to report the complete text of the CTBT to the General Assembly by June "at the very latest."

This would allow governments to examine the text, endorse it at the General Assembly and open it for signature in September.

All five declared nuclear powers: Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States are taking part in the talks.

Holum said the United States continued to believe a moratorium on testing, as observed by Washington, was the most positive way to support the negotiations.

But he also said the latest blasts might help forge consensus around a CTBT, which

would extend the 1963 Moscow treaty banning tests in the atmosphere and under water.

Asked whether a further French underground blast, due before May, might be harmful to the negotiations, Holum replied: "I would think it would be just the opposite."

"This is our chance to accomplish a nuclear CTBT. This window of opportunity may not stay open forever."

"If countries are concerned by those tests, it seems to me that a CTBT is the answer, not the problem."

Meanwhile, the Group of 21, in a statement read by Peru, called for immediately establishing a special ad-hoc committee, under the conference, to negotiate a nuclear disarmament treaty.

Pakistani Ambassador Munir Akram, in a separate speech, said the Geneva conference faced a "moment of truth" at a time when there were no confrontations between the nuclear powers.

"It is, therefore, most disturbing that most of the nuclear weapon states seem to be unprepared to consider the measures required to lead to the complete elimination of nuclear weapons."

"Some of them, while reducing their nuclear arsenals quantitatively, are upgrading them qualitatively," Akram added.

[From the Washington Post, Jan. 24, 1996]

FRANCE ACKNOWLEDGES RADIOACTIVE
LEAKAGE IN SOUTH PACIFIC NUCLEAR TESTS
(By William Drozdiak)

PARIS.—France acknowledged today that radioactive materials have leaked into the sea from its nuclear tests in the South Pacific but insisted that the quantities were so minimal that they posed no threat to the environment.

The confirmation that radioactive elements such as iodine-131 have seeped into the lagoon near the Mururoa test site seemed likely to revive the storm of protests that followed President Jacques Chirac's decision to conduct a final series of underground nuclear explosions before signing a global test-ban treaty.

Japanese Foreign Minister Yukihiko Ikeda said he will demand a full explanation from France about the nature of the leaks. Other countries in the Pacific region, notably Australia and New Zealand, are expected to follow suit, French officials said.

Defying international criticism, France has carried out five nuclear tests since September to verify a new warhead and to perfect simulation technology that will be used to monitor reliability of its nuclear weapons. A final test will take place next month before the test site is shut down permanently, French officials said.

But the latest accounts of radioactive leakage at the Mururoa test site have raised questions about the credibility of the French government's arguments that the nuclear explosions present no environmental menace.

"There is no way to assess whether their is a coverup because the French do now allow independent verification," said Tom Cochran, a nuclear-test specialist at the Natural Resources Defense Council in Washington. "What makes people suspicious about whether they are hearing the truth is the fact that these tests were really unnecessary in the first place."

France has already contended that its underground nuclear blasts inflict no damage on the fragile ecology of the Mururoa coral atoll, 750 miles southeast of Tahiti, which serves as its principal test site. Explosive devices are bored deep within the basalt foundation of the atoll, and French scientists say the intense heat from the blast vitiates the rock and traps all radioactivity before it can escape.

But Alain Barthoux, director of nuclear tests at France's Atomic Energy Commission, acknowledged that traces of radioactive material are usually "vented" into the lagoon when scientists drill down into the rock to obtain samples after every blast.

Barthoux claimed, however, that such leaks involve "insignificant amounts" of radioactive substances, such as cesium, tritium or iodine, that vanish quickly in the environment. Quantities of iodine-131, for example, which can cause cancer when ingested by humans, shrink by half within eight days and disappear entirely within 80 days, he said.

Barthoux denied a report in the Japan's Yomiuri Shimun newspaper that small amounts of radioactive iodine were continuing to leak into the water as a result of the latest round of nuclear tests. The paper quoted sources at the Geneva disarmament conference, where the global test-ban treaty is being negotiated, as saying a French nuclear expert disclosed the radiation leakage at a meeting in Washington last November.

The French specialist was quoted as saying the information was "extremely confidential."

France first acknowledged the release of radioactivity from its nuclear tests when oceanographer Jacques Cousteau visited the Mururoa site in 1987 and was allowed to conduct independent tests of the water in the lagoon. He found the presence of radioactive iodine, cesium, cobalt and europium, but in quantities that were not considered dangerous.

But he warned the Mururoa's coral crown was deeply cracked and could pose a problem if testing continued. He said risks grew that higher levels of radioactive residue could seep into the the lagoon.

French Defense Minister Charles Million denounced reports from last year of widening fissures in the atoll as "unreliable." Foreign Minister Herve de Charette told the National Assembly that "never have any cracks of any kind been spotted."

But a confidential Defense Ministry report acknowledged the government has been aware, at least since 1979, that Mururoa's underwater basalt foundation is fractured several places.

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UPDATE ON AMERICA'S PEACE-KEEPING MISSION IN BOSNIA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HUTCHINSON). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Missouri [Mr. SKELTON] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, today I am giving this second in a series of speeches updating the Congress on the state of our peacekeeping mission in Bosnia. Last night in his State of the Union Address the President thanked the American troops taking part in the Bosnian peacekeeping mission and the families that support them in their efforts. Also, it was good to see the President make a visit to the forces in Hungary and in Bosnia just a few days ago. The Americans in uniform seemed to appreciate this. I am pleased the President made the trip. Mr. Speaker, the men and women in our country's military deserve the full support of every Member in this body and the American people.