

**July 2, 1975**

**Letter, L. N. Ray, High Commissioner of India,  
Wellington, 'French Nuclear Test'**

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**Summary:**

France conducted a nuclear test on the South Pacific atoll which New Zealand criticized.

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Date: July 2, 1975

To: the Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs

From: High Commission of India, Wellington

French Nuclear Test: The first French nuclear underground test took place on June 5 on the South Pacific atoll of Fagatufa. France had earlier served a notice of a permanent character to ships to keep 30 miles clear of the Mururoa and Fagataufa atolls. In Paris, however, the Defense Ministry refused to confirm or deny the report of the explosion. A spokesman said: "Like the United States and the Soviet Union and other nuclear powers, we will make no comment on our underground tests even if these should be monitored by foreign powers." Prime Minister Rowling, in his connection, observed: "The Government reaction to such explosions remains unchanged. We have a blanket protest against any kind of nuclear explosions, whether atmospheric or underground, and whether exploded by the British, Chinese, French, Americans, Russians or Indians."

5. The French ambassador in New Zealand, Mr. Christian de Nicolay, stated: "France would have preferred to do nuclear testing on her home soil than in the Pacific, but there is not enough room (i.e. 400-mile front) for that in France. He explained that through the ages, France had been "in the front line of all European wars" and hence the French Government considered it as their supreme responsibility to protect the homeland by developing nuclear capability as an effective deterrent. The planned nuclear tests in a relatively unpopulated area of the Pacific surrounded by hundreds of miles of water would, therefore, continue. He further observed that the French people could never understand the strong reactions in New Zealand to French nuclear testing, specially when the New Zealanders themselves had fought in France in this century to protect "New Zealand soil as much as the French soil." "Knowing that," the French ambassador continued, "the French people wonder why you do not show more understanding about our feelings in protecting ourselves."

L.N. Ray, High Commissioner