

Tuesday January 10, 1950



[Sun rise](#) 0744 1731
[Moon rise](#) 2357 1121 - 57% 22 days
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Overview

January 10, 1950 (Tuesday)

- Yakov Malik, the Soviet Ambassador to the U. N., angrily walked out of a session of the United Nations Security Council, after the ten members voted 8-2 against replacing the Nationalist Chinese delegation with one from the Communist Chinese leaders who had taken control of nearly all of China in October. Although the Nationalist government was confined to the island of Taiwan, it continued to be allowed to speak for, and to exercise the veto power for, the 460 million people in China.
- **Born:** Ernie Wasson, American horticulturalist and author of gardening books, in Berkeley, California

[\[note\]](#)



Soviet ambassador walks out of UN



Council since **January 10, 1950**, over the issue of seating Red China's representative in the [United Nations](#) as the official Chinese representative.

For the second time in a week, [Jacob Malik](#), the Soviet representative to the United Nations, storms out of a meeting of the Security Council, this time in reaction to the defeat of his proposal to expel the Nationalist Chinese representative. At the same time, he announced the [Soviet Union](#)'s intention to boycott further Security Council meetings.

Several days before the January 13 meeting, Malik walked out to show his displeasure over the United Nations' **refusal to unseat the Nationalist Chinese delegation**. The Soviet Union had recognized the communist [Peoples Republic of China \(PRC\)](#) as the true Chinese government, and wanted the PRC to replace the Nationalist Chinese delegation at the United Nations.

Malik returned on January 13, however, to vote on the Soviet resolution to expel Nationalist China. Six countries--the [United States](#), Nationalist China, Cuba, Ecuador, Cuba, and Egypt--voted against the resolution, and three--the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and India--voted in favor of it. Malik immediately left the meeting, declaring that the United States was "encouraging lawlessness" by refusing to recognize the "illegal presence" of the Nationalist Chinese representatives. He concluded that "even the most convinced reactionaries" had to recognize the justness

of the Soviet resolution, and he vowed that the Soviet Union would not be bound by any decisions made by the Security Council if the Nationalist Chinese representative remained. Hoping to forestall any future Security Council action, Malik announced that the Soviet Union would no longer attend its meetings. The remaining members of the Security Council decided to carry on despite the Soviet boycott.

In late June 1950, it became apparent that the Soviet action had backfired when the issue of North Korea's invasion of South Korea was brought before the Security Council. By June 27, the Security Council voted to invoke military action by the United Nations for the first time in the organization's history. The Soviets could have blocked the action in the Security Council, since the United States, Soviet Union, China, Britain, and France each had absolute veto power, but no Russian delegate was present. In just a short time, a multinational U.N. force arrived in South Korea and the grueling three-year Korean War was underway.

[\[note\]](#)



The JCS laboriously and slowly prepared an oral briefing, but Truman's vacation and then the Christmas holidays delayed the presentation until January 10, 1950. On that date, almost five full years into his presidency, Louis Johnson and Omar Bradley finally introduced field artilleryman Truman to the intricacies of nuclear strategy.

Full text

In late August 1949, two weeks after Bradley had settled into his new post as JCS chairman and Joe Collins had replaced him as Army chief of staff, the Pentagon received its most jarring blow since World War II.

A hastily improvised and highly secret Air Force airborne "detection net," designed to pick up radioactivity from a Russian atomic bomb explosion in the atmosphere, reported unmistakable evidence of such an explosion.

In a twinkling—and long before American scientists had forecast—the "backward" peasants in Russia had achieved the impossible and America had lost its "atomic monopoly."

Since the "net" had only recently been established, there was no way of knowing with absolute certainty whether the Russians had exploded other atomic bombs earlier.

Conceivably they had and now possessed a stockpile comparable to the modest American stockpile. Whatever the exact case, the astute Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg—uncle of Air Force Chief of Staff Hoyt Vandenberg—aptly characterized the implications: "This is now a different world."³²

This news arrived at a profoundly awkward time for Commander in Chief Truman and his zealous military budget cutter Louis Johnson. At the time Truman had just decreed yet another cut in the forthcoming military budget and Johnson was gearing up to enforce it.

No specific figures had been announced, but Pentagon rumor had it that Johnson intended to cut yet another billion, from the ruinous \$12.3 billion to a catastrophic \$11 billion. The shocking and scary news from Russia would almost certainly make further cuts in the military budget difficult to justify to Congress and to the public."

It was a moment in history for Harry Truman to stand tall: to proclaim a "different world" strategically, to abandon his petty conviction that he was still being budgetarily flimflammed by the generals and admirals, and to pronounce a dramatic turnabout in his national security programs.

He did not elect that course.

He did the opposite. He—and Louis Johnson—dishonestly or stupidly pooh-poohed

the Soviet explosion as not a bomb but more likely a "laboratory accident." Although the scientific evidence indicated otherwise, in his public announcement of the discovery Truman refused to use the word "bomb," limiting himself to an ambiguous "atomic explosion."

Later, in response to a reporter's question, he actually expressed doubt that the Russians had the technological knowhow to build an atomic bomb."

Behind the scenes, rightly believing the Pentagon would use the explosion as justification for bigger military budgets, Truman stubbornly resisted all such suggestions.

His orders to Louis Johnson remained unchanged: Cut.

However, the generals, admirals, and hawkish scientists, such as [Edward Teller](#), did manage to push the president into making two major decisions, both designed to increase the size and power of America's nuclear stockpile:

One, in response to an urgent plea from the JCS, first conveyed to the White House on [May 26](#), the president on [October 17](#) finally authorized a significant production increase in numbers and types of fission bombs.

"At the time he took this action," the historian Rosenberg wrote, "Truman had never received a thorough briefing on atomic strategy from the JCS."

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Two, following a heated moral and technical debate among the nuclear physicists and pushed by a strong recommendation from the JCS, Truman on [January 31, 1950](#), authorized research on a much more powerful "hydrogen" or fusion bomb.

Six weeks later, on [March 10, 1950](#), again on the recommendation of the JCS, he approved a "crash" program for the hydrogen bomb, to be carried out "as a matter of highest urgency."³⁵

[\[note\]](#)

Missile Tests



[USS Norton Sound \(VA-11\)](#) departed [Port Hueneme California](#) today, for Alaskan waters where it is to test [Aerobees](#), [Lark](#), and [Loon](#), missiles as well as an auxiliary propulsion system for the Lark.

There are 27 observers representing the Army, Navy, and Air Force, including 8 scientists connected with the Aerobee upper atmosphere research program of James Van Allen's. [\[note\]](#)

[Notes for Tuesday January 10, 1950](#)