

Site Of South Atlantic Flash Reported

WASHINGTON (AP) — A report by the Naval Research Laboratory indicates the mysterious flash in the South Atlantic in September most likely occurred over the Antarctic continent.

The Washington Star reported Sunday that the secret report also said the flash was accompanied by a large underwater signal that resembled signals given off previously by nuclear explosions.

Last month, the Carter administration said a panel of scientists had concluded that the flash "was not from a nuclear explosion."

Only a day earlier, a Defense Intelligence Agency report had found that the flash probably was caused by a clandestine nuclear explosion, Pentagon sources said at the time.

The Naval Research Laboratory's 300-page report did not alter the administration's view on the explosion, according to the Star.

"It moves the area of possibility away from areas that were suspected before," an unidentified ad-

ministration official was quoted as saying.

The document, he reportedly said, "reinforces" the views of the White House scientific panel because it would be difficult to conduct a nuclear test over or near Antarctica without detection by weather and scientific research stations there.

But Dr. Alan Berman, director of research for the laboratory, said the pulses of underwater sound detected by Navy sensors at two locations are the "strongest" corroboration of a nuclear explosion.

"It's strong enough to make the case in its own right," he told the newspaper.

Last Sept. 22, a VELA nuclear test detection satellite registered what was described as an "optical flash."

U.S. intelligence sources said at the time they believed South Africa might have exploded a nuclear device in the atmosphere over a remote part of the South Atlantic.

South Africa denied conducting any nuclear test.

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