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China weather "magic" conjures blue sky for parade

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BEIJING (Reuters) - China's air force deployed a "magic-like" range of chemicals and technology to clear Beijing's smoggy air for a grand parade marking the 60th anniversary of Communist China, state media said on Thursday.

Chemists and officials worked for weeks on the country's most ambitious ever attempt at weather modification, with air force technicians fanning out across the region to help teams operate complex equipment, the official Xinhua agency said.

The evening before the parade chemicals were fired into the hazy skies, and a light rain washed the city clean.

Surrounding provinces had already been loading clouds with silver iodide and dry ice, to try and force rain to fall before it reached Beijing, the report added.

"Only a handful of countries in the world could organise such large-scale, magic-like weather modification," said Cui Lianqing, a senior air force meteorologist who said the parade operation was the largest in China's history.

Contingency plans allowed for the teams to use one kind of chemicals to bring down rain in the parade area, and another to hold it off, he told Xinhua.

China has been researching cloud seeding and other weather manipulation techniques since the 1950s, but in the past has met with mixed success.

The opening to last year's flagship Olympic Games fell on a day when skies looked hazy despite a raft of anti-pollution and weather manipulation measures.

And a deluge in 2005 forced a hasty last-minute venue change for an outdoor ceremony featuring top Chinese leaders, even after organisers had been promised China could guarantee dry weather. [Continued...](#)

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Obama surprise winner of Nobel for peace

Barack Obama won the Nobel Peace Prize on Friday in a stunning decision that honoured the U.S. president more for promise than achievement and drew both praise and skepticism around the world. [Full Article](#) | [Video](#)

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