

WIRE EMBARGO UNTIL 7:30 PM

DECEMBER 2, 1974

Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSETEXT OF THE PRESIDENT'S OPENING REMARKS
ON HIS ASIAN TRIP
AT PRESS CONFERENCE #5

Perhaps I can anticipate some of your questions by summarizing my recent visits to Japan, the Republic of Korea and the Soviet Union.

In Japan, we succeeded in establishing a new era of relations between our two nations. We demonstrated our continuing commitment to the independence and security of South Korea. At Vladivostok we put a firm ceiling on the strategic arms race which has heretofore eluded us since the nuclear age began. I believe this is something for which future generations will thank us. And finally, Secretary Kissinger's mission maintained the momentum of our relationship with the People's Republic of China.

My meetings in Vladivostok with General Secretary Brezhnev were a valuable opportunity to review Soviet-American relations and chart their future course. Although this was our original purpose, Secretary Brezhnev and I found it possible to go beyond this get-acquainted stage. Building on the achievements of the past three years we agreed that prospects were favorable for more substantial, and I may say, very intensive negotiations on the primary issue of limitation of strategic arms. In the end, we agreed on the general framework for a new agreement that will last through 1985.

We agreed it is realistic to aim at completing this agreement next year. This is possible because we made major breakthroughs on two critical issues:

(1) We agreed to put a ceiling of 2400 each on the total number of inter-continental ballistic missiles, submarine-launched missiles and heavy bombers.

(2) We agreed to limit the number of missiles that can be armed with multiple warheads (MIRVs). Of each side's total of 2400, 1320 can be so armed.

These ceilings are well below the force levels which would otherwise have been expected over the next ten years, and very substantially below the forces which would result from an all-out arms race over that same period.

What we have done is to set firm and equal limits on the strategic forces of each side, thus preventing an arms race with all its terror, instability, war-breeding tension and economic waste. We have in addition created the solid basis from which future arms reductions can be... and hope fully will be... negotiated.

It will take more detailed negotiations to convert this agreed framework into a comprehensive accord. But we have made a long step forward toward peace, on a basis of equality, the only basis on which agreement was possible.

Beyond this, our improved relations with the other nations of Asia developed on this journey will continue to serve the interests of the United States and the cause of peace for months to come. Economic, energy, security and trade relationships were discussed which will be of mutual benefit to us all.

I would like to repeat publicly my thanks and gratitude for the hospitality extended to me by all my hosts, and through me to the American people.