

March 31, 1976

Office of the White House Press Secretary

NOTICE TO THE PRESS

The Threshold Test Ban Treaty (TTBT) was signed on July 3, 1974, and scheduled to take effect on March 31, 1976. However, Article III of that treaty calls for the U. S. and U. S. S. R. to negotiate a separate agreement governing the conduct of underground nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes (PNEs). At the time of signing the TTBT and on several subsequent occasions, we stated that in view of the close relationship between the verification of a threshold on nuclear weapon tests and the conduct of peaceful nuclear explosions, we would not present the TTBT to the Senate for ratification until a satisfactory PNE agreement had been concluded.

The negotiations for a PNE agreement began in October 1974 with the agreed objective of ensuring that peaceful nuclear explosions would not be conducted so as to provide weapons-related benefits that were otherwise precluded by the TTBT. The two sides have made considerable progress in completing an agreement and the negotiations are continuing in Moscow to resolve the few remaining issues.

The two sides hope that a satisfactory agreement can be concluded within the next several weeks. During this period, we expect that neither side will conduct weapons tests above the threshold of 150 kilotons. For the immediate future, we have no plans for high yield weapons tests above the threshold of 150 kilotons.

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