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Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSE

FACT SHEET

Treaty on Underground Explosions
For Peaceful Purposes (PNEs)

The President is signing today the Treaty on Underground Explosions for Peaceful Purposes which will commit the parties not to carry out any individual peaceful nuclear explosion with a yield exceeding 150 kilotons, or any group explosion (consisting of a number of individual explosions) with an aggregate yield exceeding 1500 kilotons.

Negotiations: Began on October 7, 1974 in Moscow through April 8, 1976 (six rounds of talks). These negotiations were called for in Article III of the Threshold Test Ban Treaty (signed on July 3, 1974); this agreement did not cover PNEs.

Purposes: To govern peaceful nuclear explosions (PNEs) in ways that will prevent acquisition of weapons-related data otherwise precluded by the Threshold Test Ban Treaty.

Verification: Observers and instruments will be permitted at the site of all explosions for which the aggregate yield is above 150 kilotons and for some explosions with aggregate yields between 100 and 150 kilotons, on the basis of consultation between the parties. Seismic instruments will be used and information exchanged for all explosions including location, date, time, local geology, planned yield, and specific actual yield and results afterwards.

Accomplishments: Establishes precedent setting provisions for extensive data exchange and on-site observers in the implementation of an arms control measure. Assures that no weapons-related data otherwise precluded by the Threshold Test Ban (TTBT) will be derived from peaceful nuclear explosions.

Ratification: The Treaty will be submitted to the Senate for advice and consent along with the Threshold Test Ban.

Treaty On Underground Nuclear Weapons Tests
(Threshold Test Ban Treaty)

Negotiations: Began in May, 1974, in Moscow; the Treaty was signed by President Nixon and General-Secretary Brezhnev on July 3, 1974, in Moscow.

Purpose: To limit the yield of underground nuclear weapons tests.

Basic Commitment: Not to conduct any underground nuclear weapon test with a yield greater than 150 kilotons .

Verification: By national technical means; i. e. , seismic instruments and exchange of information. To assist in the assessment of the seismic data, the Parties will provide information on geographical boundaries, geology and other features of the testing areas. After a test has taken place, geographic coordinates of the location are to be furnished to the other party. In addition, data will be exchanged on a certain number of "calibration tests." Finally, other information available to the United States will be used to cross-check the data provided.

Accomplishments: Will limit the explosive force of tested weapons to yields significantly below the yield of many nuclear weapons that have been tested by both countries. Agreement to exchange data relating to nuclear weapons tests represents a new form of cooperation in implementing arms control agreements.

Ratification: To be submitted to the Senate along with the companion Treaty on Underground Nuclear Explosions for Peaceful Purposes, which was signed on May 28, 1976.

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