

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 29, 1976

Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSE

TO THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES:

As we celebrate our Bicentennial year, we are thankful that America is at peace. For the first time in many years, no American is engaged in combat anywhere in defense of our freedom. But we know that there are in the world forces hostile to freedom, and that to protect our security and the values we prize we must maintain our strength, our resolve, and our endeavors to safeguard peace.

To meet our responsibilities today we must deal with the problems of security in ways never dreamed of by our founding fathers. We must influence the policies of possible adversaries in two ways: by keeping our military forces strong, and by pursuing negotiations to create stability rather than a spiraling arms race in weapons of incalculable destructiveness.

In both these endeavors, there are grounds for confidence. We have and will maintain a strategic relationship with the Soviet Union which preserves our security. At the same time, we will continue to pursue arms control agreements that lessen the danger of war and serve to promote a stable and peaceful international order. We are negotiating with the Soviet Union, with the Warsaw Pact countries, in the multilateral Geneva-based Conference of the Committee on Disarmament, and in the United Nations. We are mindful that many difficult questions remain to be solved, but I can report that steady progress has been made.

On May 28 I signed the Treaty on Underground Nuclear Explosions for Peaceful Purposes which has now been submitted to the Senate together with the related Threshold Test Ban Treaty. Both treaties represent genuine progress in the two-decade struggle to halt nuclear weapons testing.

In the current phase of the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks, we and the Soviet Union have made considerable progress since the Vladivostok meeting. Most of the elements needed for final agreement are already agreed. Certain issues are still unsettled but we will continue our effort to resolve them in a way that protects the interests of both sides, and enables us to complete a new SALT agreement on the basis of the Vladivostok accords.

In negotiations to reduce forces in central Europe, both the NATO and the Warsaw Pact nations have made new proposals. Through these negotiations we hope to achieve a more stable military balance in central Europe at lower levels of forces. And in the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament, the United States and the Soviet Union have tabled identical draft texts of a convention to outlaw environmental modification techniques for hostile purposes.

The Administration has undertaken a vigorous action program to strengthen the barriers against further proliferation of nuclear weapons. We have moved to increase the effectiveness of the Non-proliferation Treaty and the Inter-

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national Atomic Energy Agency. Controls on American exports of nuclear materials and sensitive technology have been made even more rigorous. The United States has taken an important initiative to establish new cooperation with the other major nations supplying nuclear equipment and technology, and a common understanding has been reached on principles and standards governing nuclear exports.

These are tangible evidence of progress. This fifteenth annual report of the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency sets forth in detail and perspective the advances that have been made and the difficult, essential work that must still be done. My Administration remains dedicated to continued and determined efforts for the control and balanced reduction of armaments.

GERALD R. FORD

THE WHITE HOUSE,
July 29, 1976

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