

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 29, 1976

Office of the White House Press Secretary

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THE WHITE HOUSE

TO THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES:

With a view to receiving the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, I transmit herewith the Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Limitation of Underground Nuclear Weapon Tests, and the Protocol thereto, referred to as the Threshold Test Ban Treaty (TTB Treaty), and the Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on Underground Nuclear Explosions for Peaceful Purposes, and the Protocol thereto (PNE Treaty). The TTB Treaty was signed in Moscow on July 3, 1974 and the PNE Treaty was signed in Washington and Moscow on May 28, 1976. For the information of the Senate, I transmit also the detailed report of the Department of State on these Treaties.

These Treaties together establish procedures for the conduct of all underground nuclear explosions by the United States and the Soviet Union. All nuclear explosions other than underground nuclear explosions are prohibited by the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under Water (the Limited Test Ban Treaty) of 1963. The TTB Treaty and PNE Treaty are the first agreements since the Limited Test Ban Treaty to impose direct restraints on nuclear explosions by the Parties and, as such, contribute to limiting nuclear arms competition.

These two Treaties represent approximately two years of intensive effort. Negotiation of the TTB Treaty began in the Spring of 1974 and was completed in July of that year. However, the question of the relationship of underground nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes to limitations on nuclear weapon testing was not then resolved. As a result, Article III of the TTB Treaty provided that the Parties would negotiate and conclude an agreement governing underground nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes. Work on the PNE Treaty began in the Fall of 1974 and after six lengthy negotiating sessions was completed in April of 1976.

The TTB Treaty and the PNE Treaty are closely interrelated and complement one another. The TTB Treaty places a limitation of 150 kilotons on all underground nuclear weapon tests carried out by the Parties. The PNE Treaty similarly provides for a limitation of 150 kilotons on all individual underground nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes.

During the negotiation of the PNE Treaty, the Parties investigated whether individual explosions with yields above 150 kilotons could be accommodated consistent with the agreed aim of not providing weapon-related benefits otherwise precluded by the TTB Treaty. The Parties did not develop a basis for such an accommodation, largely because it has not been possible to distinguish between nuclear explosive device technology as applied for weapon-related purposes and

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as applied for peaceful purposes. The Parties therefore agreed that the yield limitations on individual explosions in the two Treaties would be the same.

The TTB Treaty and the PNE Treaty contain numerous provisions to ensure adequate verification, including some concepts, more far-reaching than those found in previous arms control agreements, which are not only important in themselves but which will have significant precedential value as well. For example, the Limited Test Ban Treaty is verified only by national technical means. The TTB and PNE Treaties add requirements for exchange of specific information in advance to assist verification by national technical means, and the PNE Treaty establishes procedures for on-site observation under certain conditions on the territory of the Party conducting the explosion.

The TTB Treaty provides for an exchange of data on the geography and geology of nuclear weapon test sites as well as the yields of some actual weapons tests conducted at each site. The PNE Treaty requires that the Party conducting any underground nuclear explosion for peaceful purposes provide the other Party in advance with data on the geography and geology of the place where the explosion is to be carried out, its purpose, and specific information on each explosion itself. These requirements are related to the yield of the explosion and become more detailed as the magnitude of the explosions increase.

In addition to the limitation on individual nuclear explosions of 150 kilotons, the PNE Treaty provides for an aggregate yield limitation of 1.5 megatons on group underground nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes. A group explosion consists of substantially simultaneous individual explosions located within a specific geometrical relationship to one another. The Treaty provides for mandatory on-site observer rights for group explosions with an aggregate yield in excess of 150 kilotons in order to determine that the yield of each individual explosion in the group does not exceed 150 kilotons and that the explosions serve the stated peaceful purposes. The Treaty also provides for on-site observers for explosions with an aggregate yield between 100 and 150 kilotons if both Parties agree, on the basis of information provided, that such observers would be appropriate for the confirmation of the yield of the explosion.

The TTB Treaty and the PNE Treaty, taken together as integrated and complementary components of this important limitation on nuclear explosions, provide that very large yield nuclear explosions will no longer be carried out by the Parties. This is one more useful step in our continuing efforts to develop comprehensive and balanced limitations on nuclear weapons. We will continue our efforts to reach an adequately verifiable agreement banning all nuclear weapon testing, but in so doing we must ensure that controls on peaceful nuclear explosions are consistent with such a ban. These Treaties are in the national interest, and I respectfully recommend that the Senate give its advice and consent to ratification.

GERALD R. FORD

THE WHITE HOUSE,  
JULY 29, 1976

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