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JANUARY 20, 1977

Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSE

TEXT OF A LETTER FROM THE
PRESIDENT TO THE SPEAKER OF THE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
AND THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

January 19, 1977

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Arms control as a means of maintaining peace and security has been a principal objective of my Administration. In this nuclear era our arms control policy and defense efforts must be complementary. We must seek to influence policies of possible adversaries by maintaining strong military forces and by pursuing negotiations to enhance stability, not by encouraging an arms race which would increase the risk of nuclear war.

SALT is a proven means of furthering the essential dialogue between the United States and the Soviet Union on arms control. Our goal is to promote stability by mutual restraint in strategic nuclear competition, to limit growth of the nuclear forces of both sides, and to reduce them through verifiable agreements. This effort, I am confident, will succeed.

As a part of our efforts to restrain strategic nuclear competition with the Soviet Union, we have also negotiated two treaties which limit the yield of nuclear explosive tests: the Threshold Test Ban Treaty and the related Nuclear Explosions for Peaceful Purposes Treaty. Both of these treaties represent genuine progress. They contain precedent-setting provisions which will enhance the prospects for further progress in this area. These treaties have been submitted to the Senate, and I urge that it provide its advice and consent to ratification.

Complementing the resolution of nuclear rivalry with the Soviet Union is another imperative in our dialogue for survival: Preventing the further spread of nuclear weapons. If nuclear arsenals proliferate in the world, the likelihood of a nuclear conflict is vastly increased. The worldwide need for peaceful nuclear energy complicates this problem, since the same technology that produces such energy can be diverted to the development and production of nuclear weapons.

To emphasize more strongly our commitment to the objective of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, I announced a new, comprehensive United States nuclear energy policy last October which harmonizes our non-proliferation objectives with our domestic energy policy. We have tightened controls on American exports of sensitive

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