

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506

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October 7, 1974

National Security Decision Memorandum 273

TO: The Secretary of Defense
The Deputy Secretary of State
The Director, U.S. Arms Control and
Disarmament Agency
The Chairman, U.S. Atomic Energy Commission

SUBJECT: Instructions for U.S. Delegation to the PNE
Negotiations, Moscow, October 7, 1974

The following instructions are approved for the negotiations on underground nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes (PNEs) beginning in Moscow on October 7, 1974.

1. The Delegation should state that it proceeds from the assumption that the basic purpose of the negotiations is to develop a PNE agreement as called for in Article III of the Threshold Test Ban Treaty (TTBT).

2. In the initial stage of the negotiations the principal task of the Delegation will be to elicit Soviet views and proposals on the content of the PNE agreement. Toward this end, the Delegation should set forth at the outset of the negotiations the US view that the PNE agreement must satisfy the following criteria:

a. PNEs must not provide weapon-related benefits otherwise precluded or limited by the TTBT.

b. The fact PNE activities are not contributing to such benefits must be adequately verifiable.

c. The agreement must be consistent with existing treaty obligations, including in particular the Limited Test Ban Treaty (LTBT).

The Delegation should seek Soviet views on the above criteria.

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Classified by Henry A. Kissinger

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3. The Delegation should state that the US has several concerns related to how these criteria can best be satisfied; therefore, we need at an early date Soviet views on several issues. In particular:

a. What specific provisions do the Soviets propose to ensure that PNEs are used for peaceful purposes only and will not provide weapon testing benefits otherwise precluded or limited by the TTBT, particularly weapon development, military effects experiments, or testing of stockpile weapons?

b. What will be the specific rights and functions of observers?

c. What information on geography, geology, and other factors descriptive of PNE operations will be exchanged to facilitate verification?

4. The Delegation should state that, in order to systematically examine the above concerns, the two sides will need to exchange appropriately detailed descriptions of their respective PNE programs at an early time, including information on types of PNE operations and sizes and numbers of explosions.

5. With regard to the implementation of Article V of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), when this is raised by the Soviets the Delegation should state that it has no views to express on this subject at the present time, but would like to hear the views of the Soviet Delegation on how this might be dealt with in the upcoming NPT Review Conference.

6. The Delegation should refrain from discussing the relationship of PNEs to achieving non-proliferation objectives.

7. The Delegation is not authorized to negotiate or discuss any changes in the LTBT or to discuss possible radioactivity criteria under the LTBT.

8. The U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union, Walter J. Stoessel, is designated head of the U.S. Delegation.


Henry A. Kissinger

cc: The Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff
The Director of Central Intelligence

