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THE WHITE HOUSE

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October 10, 1986

NATIONAL SECURITY DECISION
DIRECTIVE NUMBER 247

Ratification of Existing Treaties Limiting Nuclear Testing (X)

United States policy on nuclear testing limitations is clear:

First, our highest arms control priority in the area of nuclear testing has been and remains to seek verification improvements to the existing Threshold Test Ban Treaty (TTBT) and Peaceful Nuclear Explosions Treaty (PNET). I have made it clear that, once the Soviets agree to improvements which would permit effective verification, I am prepared to move forward on ratification of these two treaties. (X)

Second, as I have made clear to General Secretary Gorbachev, once our verification concerns have been satisfied and the treaties have been ratified, and in association with a program to reduce and ultimately eliminate all nuclear weapons, we are prepared to engage in discussions on ways to implement a step-by-step parallel program of limiting and ultimately ending nuclear testing. (X)

Third, the United States remains committed to the ultimate goal of the total elimination nuclear testing, a goal endorsed by every U.S. President since President Eisenhower. While a comprehensive test ban remains a long-term objective of the United States, however, such a ban must be viewed in the context of a time when we do not need to depend on nuclear deterrence to ensure international security and stability, and when we have achieved broad, deep, and verifiable arms reductions, substantially improved verification capabilities, expanded confidence-building measures, and greater balance in conventional forces. (X)

In order to make progress toward our goals, induce the Soviet Union to negotiate verification improvements, and ensure the necessary Congressional consensus for our objectives, I have decided to take two new steps:

First, I informed General Secretary Gorbachev in Reykjavik that, that if the Soviet Union will, prior to the initiation of ratification proceedings in the Senate next year, agree to

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essential TTBT/PNET verification procedures which could be submitted to the Senate for its consideration in the form of a protocol or other appropriate codicil, I will, as a first order of business for the 100th Congress, request the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification of the TTBT and PNET treaties. However, if the Soviet Union fails to agree to the required package of verification improvements prior to the convening of the 100th Congress, I will still seek Senate advice and consent, but with an appropriate reservation to the treaties that would ensure they would not take effect until I am able to certify they are effectively verifiable. ✕

Second, I informed the General Secretary that, once our TTBT/PNET verification concerns have been satisfied and the treaties have been ratified, I will propose that the United States and the Soviet Union immediately engage in negotiations on ways to implement a step-by-step parallel program -- in association with a program to reduce and ultimately eliminate all nuclear weapons -- of limiting and ultimately ending nuclear testing. Pending additional analysis, I have reserved judgement on the precise form such a step-by-step program might take or the forum in which such discussions might be held. ✕

In order to implement this decision, I request the Secretary of State to prepare, and submit for my approval not later than one week prior to the convening of the 100th Congress, an appropriate message seeking Senate advice and consent to ratification. The message should include a proposed reservation, to be prepared by the Secretaries of Defense and Energy jointly, that would ensure ratification would not take effect until I am able to certify the treaties are effectively verifiable. ✕

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