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National Security Decision
Directive Number 81

February 7, 1983

NEGOTIATION OF IMPROVED NUCLEAR TEST
VERIFICATION MEASURES (C)

Effective verification measures for the Threshold Test Ban (TTB) and Peaceful Nuclear Explosions (PNE) Treaties are essential to the national security. The Interdepartmental Group on Nuclear Testing Limitations Policy has completed a net assessment of the effects of the TTBT on U.S.-U.S.S.R. nuclear balance, and a detailed plan for verification of nuclear test yields by direct on-site measurement, as directed in NSDD-51 and NSDD-63. These studies are accepted, and are to provide the basis for our negotiating proposal. (S)

Steps necessary to commence negotiations with the Soviet Union, to incorporate the proposed verification measures in new protocols to the Treaties, should be initiated as follows:

- Inform the Congress of our intentions.
- As soon as possible, initiate discussions with our close Allies, and particularly the United Kingdom, to explain the nature of our proposal.
- After these actions have been completed, present a U.S. initiative to the Soviet Union informing them of our desire to seek improved verification for these two treaties. (S)

The Interdepartmental Group should prepare for negotiations by completing the following work:

- Prepare briefing material on the proposed verification measures, to include an explanation of the rationale for improved verification, for use with the Congress, Allies, and the public, as appropriate.
- Propose a delegation and draft proposed instructions.
- Continue with the technical work necessary to refine the proposed verification technique.

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In preparing for the negotiations, consideration should be given to suggesting to the Soviets joint trial experiments with direct verification techniques as a means of developing and validating suitable verification procedures. (S)

It should be understood that yield values used to trigger verification procedures are not to be interpreted as constraints on nuclear testing. (S)

On a related matter, the Interdepartmental Group should consider the merits of the recent JCS recommendation to renegotiate Article V of the Threshold Test Ban Treaty to provide for automatic termination in place of automatic renewal, and should forward its recommendations to the National Security Council. (S)

If new verification protocols are successfully negotiated, we intend, subject to national security requirements existing at that time (including decision on the Article V issue raised by the JCS), to seek Senate advice and consent to ratify the TTB and PNE treaties. (S)

Ronald Reagan