

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

December 23, 1985

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NATIONAL SECURITY DECISION
DIRECTIVE NUMBER 203

Nuclear Testing Limitation:
Responding to the Soviet Proposal of December 5 (U)

I have reviewed the paper on Nuclear Testing Limitations prepared under the auspices of the Senior Arms Control Group and the agency views provided on that paper. Based on my review, I have decided to respond to the proposals made on this subject by Secretary General Gorbachev in his letter of December 5, 1985, using the first alternative approach outlined in the paper. (S)

The fundamental U.S. policy with respect to nuclear testing limitations initially outlined in NSDD-51 remains valid. For as long as the United States and its allies must rely upon the vital contributions of nuclear weapons to underwrite security and deter aggression, we will have to conduct nuclear tests. (S)

The U.S. response to Secretary General Gorbachev should build upon the principled U.S. long-standing positions in this area which are based upon that policy. In addition, our response should reiterate the U.S. offer to the Soviet Union to send experts to visit the United States' nuclear test site to measure the yield of a test and to have U.S. and Soviet experts meet to discuss how best to make progress on verification based upon the common ground that may exist between the most recent U.S. and Soviet proposals in this area. (S)

At such a meeting, the U.S. group would be prepared to discuss both the U.S. and Soviet proposals. However, the U.S. objective would be to seek Soviet agreement to begin the process of developing effective verification measures for the Threshold Test Ban Treaty (TTBT) and the Peaceful Nuclear Explosions Treaty (PNET). (S)

Ronald Reagan

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