

## **Statement by Principal Deputy Press Secretary Speakes on Limiting Nuclear Weapons Testing**

*July 29, 1985*

President Reagan's central arms control objective, and the objective declared in the U.S.-Soviet joint statement issued in Geneva last January, is to eliminate nuclear weapons altogether. We, therefore, have proposed at the bargaining table in the nuclear and space talks in Geneva radical reductions in the size of existing nuclear arsenals, beginning with the most destabilizing ballistic missiles. We believe such radical reductions, coupled with possible future strategic defenses for both sides, are the most promising avenues to eliminate the danger of nuclear war. We regret that the Soviet Union to date has been unwilling to negotiate in concrete and detailed terms to achieve such reductions in Geneva. In this respect not only have they failed to address our desire for deep reductions and enhanced stability, but they have not been willing to present specific numerical levels supporting their own approach.

While we believe the most direct path is through equitable, verifiable reductions, we also believe that verifiable limitations on nuclear testing can play a useful, though more modest role. For that reason, President Reagan, in his speech to the U.N. General Assembly on September 24, 1984, proposed that the Soviet Union and the U.S. exchange visits of experts to

measure directly at nuclear test sites the yields of nuclear weapons tests. The President views this proposal as a means to increase confidence in verifiable limits on underground testing. To date, the Soviet Union has refused to agree to this practical and fair-minded approach.

As a demonstration of our seriousness, the President has extended to the Soviet leadership our invitation for a Soviet team to observe and to measure a nuclear test at our Nevada test site. This offer, which is unconditional, is a unilateral step which clearly demonstrates the U.S. intention to go the extra mile. The Soviet experts are invited to bring any instrumentation devices that the Soviet Union deems necessary to measure the yield of this test. This U.S. initiative demonstrates our commitment to achieving verifiable limitations in nuclear testing.

We would welcome Soviet interest in joining us in developing and putting into place truly verifiable and durable limits on nuclear testing. We believe the President's initiative is the most practical approach to begin addressing this serious problem. We reiterate there are no conditions to this far-reaching offer, and we look forward to a positive and timely Soviet response.