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James C. Hagerty, Press Secretary to the President

THE WHITE HOUSE

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

The United States welcomes the successful conclusion of the Geneva meeting of experts who have been considering whether and how nuclear weapons tests could be detected. Their conclusions indicate that, if there were an agreement to eliminate such tests, its effective supervision and enforcement would be technically possible.

This is a most important conclusion, the more so because it is concurred in by the experts of the Soviet Union. Progress in the field of disarmament agreements depends upon the ability to establish effective international controls and the willingness of the countries concerned to accept those controls. The fact therefore of an agreement on technical possibilities of inspection and control opens up a prospect of progress in the vitally important field of disarmament.

The United States, taking account of the Geneva conclusions, is prepared to proceed promptly to negotiate an agreement with other nations which have tested nuclear weapons for the suspension of nuclear weapons tests and the actual establishment of an international control system on the basis of the experts' report.



If this is accepted in principle by the other nations which have tested nuclear weapons, then in order to facilitate the detailed negotiations the United States is prepared, unless testing is resumed by the Soviet Union, to withhold further testing on its part of atomic and hydrogen weapons for a period of one year from the beginning of the negotiations.

As part of the agreement to be negotiated, and on a basis of reciprocity, the United States would be further prepared to suspend the testing of nuclear weapons on a year-by-year basis subject to a determination at the beginning of each year: (A) the agreed inspection system is installed and working effectively; and (B) satisfactory progress is being made in reaching agreement on and implementing major and substantial arms control measures such as the United States has long sought. The agreement should also deal with the problem of detonations for peaceful purposes, as distinct from weapons tests.

Our negotiators will be instructed and ready by October 31 this year to open negotiations with other similarly instructed negotiators.

As the United States has frequently made clear, the suspension of testing of atomic and hydrogen weapons is not, in itself, a measure of disarmament or a limitation of armament. An agreement in this respect is significant if it leads to other and more substantial agreements relating to limitation and reduction of fissionable material for weapons and to other essential phases of disarmament. It is in this hope that the United States makes this proposal.

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