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Geneva Office  
63, rue de Lausanne  
1202 Geneva  
Switzerland  
41 22 7383294  
(Fax) 7383292

Rome Office  
Accademia dei Lincei  
via della Lungara 229  
00165 Roma, Italy  
39 6 6872606  
(Fax) 6878376

London Office  
63A Gt Russeil St  
London WC1B 3BJ  
England  
44 71 4056661  
(Fax) 8315651

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14 June 1993

PUGWASH LETTER TO PRESIDENT CLINTON ON NUCLEAR TESTING

President Bill Clinton  
The White House

Dear President Clinton:

We are writing, as all of the members of the Pugwash Council attending this year's Pugwash Conference, to urge you to extend the current U.S. moratorium on nuclear explosive tests and to reject the arguments for additional testing before conclusion of a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT).

We applaud your commitment to achievement of a CTBT and the embodiment of that goal in the Hatfield-Exon-Mitchell Amendment to the FY1993 Energy and Water Development Appropriation Act. We believe that a resumption of U.S. testing would delay -- and might well completely undermine -- the attainment of this critical objective. Both the delay in progress toward a CTBT and the perverse signals sent by the testing itself, moreover, would surely impair, perhaps fatally, the prospects for a positive outcome of the Non-Proliferation Treaty Extension Conference scheduled for 1995. The resulting damage to the most vital security interests of the U.S. and the world cannot possibly be compensated by the minuscule benefits ascribed to a resumption of testing by its proponents.

Let us be more specific. A resumption of U.S. testing, no matter how brief its duration or how narrow its stated purposes, would lead to:

- (i) a resumption of Russian testing, a strengthening of the position of hardliners in Russia, and the creation of a further impediment to favorable resolution of the precarious nuclear-weapons status of Ukraine;
- (ii) a resumption of French testing and a strengthening of the position of those in France who would like to block attainment of a CTBT altogether; and
- (iii) assured continuation of Chinese testing, quite possibly extending beyond 1996.

These outcomes would weaken support for and complicate the negotiation of a CTBT; would squander any leadership and influence the United States and the other declared nuclear-weapon states might otherwise hope to exert in the NPT Extension Conference; and would strengthen pro-bomb factions in nuclear-threshold states, at best reducing the chance of engaging these states in the NPT and CTBT regimes and at worst propelling them toward nuclear tests of their own.