

purposes would be established until acceptable arrangements for conducting them were worked out; the treaty would enter into force upon ratification by 20 signatory governments, including those of the three nuclear weapon powers initiating it; and a conference would be held at an "appropriate" time to review its operation. A large measure of consensus was reached even on the question of verification, including the possibility of on-site inspection. In 1982, however, at the initiative of the United States, these talks were suspended *sine die*.

In later years, especially since the initiation of the SDI programme, parts of which may require nuclear tests, the United States came to consider a complete ban on nuclear explosions only as a "long-term" objective and only as a component of a large arms control package. Consequently, the USA has opposed a test ban as a separate measure, regardless of its verifiability, challenged the Soviet contention that a halt to nuclear testing is a necessary step towards diminishing the nuclear threat, and refused to emulate the Soviet Union when it proclaimed in 1985 a unilateral moratorium on nuclear explosions and abstained from all testing for over a year and a half. The negotiations for a comprehensive nuclear test ban have ended in limbo. The long-running controversy over the mandate of a working committee to deal with the subject of tests at the Geneva-based Conference on Disarmament (CD) served simply as a distraction from the fundamental difference between the main partners as to whether cessation of nuclear explosions was at all a desirable measure.

#### ***IV. What is the value of the test limitation treaties which have been signed?***

Thirty years of deliberations and negotiations on a total prohibition of nuclear test explosions have resulted in only partial agreements. The parties thereto may conduct nuclear explosions solely underground, and the yields of the explosions must not exceed the agreed limit.