

7. COMPREHENSIVE TEST BAN

Background

In the late 1950s The United States and Britain began negotiations with the Soviet Union on a Comprehensive Test Ban (CTB) on all forms of nuclear weapons testing. Although these efforts failed to produce a CTB, they did result in the Partial Test Ban Treaty (PTBT) which was signed by the three countries in 1963. The Partial Test Ban prohibits testing in the atmosphere, underwater or in outer space and has since been signed by 111 other countries, but not by France and China. The Threshold Test Ban Treaty (TTBT), limiting underground nuclear tests to 150 kilotons, was signed in 1974 by the Soviet Union and the United States, but has not been ratified by the United States Senate. Similarly the Peaceful Nuclear Explosions Treaty (PNET) of 1976, which established special provisions for peaceful nuclear explosions, has not been ratified by the US Senate. Despite the failure to ratify, the signatory states have undertaken to comply with both treaties. Trilateral negotiations on a CTB were re-opened by the Carter Administration in 1977, and substantial progress was made in developing a draft treaty. However, in the wake of strong opposition in the United States, and the political turmoil involved in the negotiation and ratification debate on the SALT II Treaty, little more of substance was accomplished in the negotiations. The negotiations ceased under the Reagan Administration.

On 6 August 1985 the Soviet Union began a unilateral moratorium on nuclear testing, which it extended four times. Although the Soviet Union continually asked the United States to join in the moratorium and negotiate a CTB treaty the US refused. The moratorium ended with a US test in Nevada on 3 February 1987. The Soviet Union resumed testing on 28 February 1987. The United States has stated that while the CTB is a long-term goal for them testing must continue in order to ensure weapons reliability and national security. The US Administration also believes that a CTB cannot be