

The "benefits" being offered in exchange for these appalling consequences are said to be such improvements in the reliability, safety, and performance of U.S. and U.K. warheads as might be accomplished with the addition of 15 (or fewer) further tests beyond the thousand such explosions that these two countries have already conducted. But what reliability problems, in a U.S. nuclear arsenal numbering several thousands of warheads of well tested types, could imperil the credibility of the deterrent function this arsenal is said to serve (or, if they existed, could be resolved by just a handful of tests)? How much additional safety could a few more tests buy, after nearly fifty years of prior learning about how to make these devices safe? And if, as some have suggested, the perfection of a "new" warhead is on the testing agenda, what need for such a thing can the United States or the United Kingdom plausibly assert in the post-Cold-War world, and what are likely to be the consequences, for proliferation incentives, of asserting it?

We find it difficult to believe, Mr. President, that hidden in the classified details are rationales to persuade an objective analyst that these outwardly meager benefits of a few tests are really large enough to offset the huge costs and risks that resuming testing would entail. It seems more probable that the proponents of such a resumption are hoping for just what you and we would wish to prevent -- namely, that a few more tests will lead to a great many more, by pushing a CTBT once more out of reach. Please do not allow that to happen.

Respectfully,

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 Mr. Sverre Lodgaard (Norway), Member of the Council
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 Professor Sebastian Pease (UK), Member of the Council

cc: Vice President Gore
 Secretary of State Christopher
 Secretary of Defense Aspin
 Secretary of Energy O'Leary
 National Security Advisor Lake

Presidential Science Advisor Gibbons
 Senator Exon
 Senator Hatfield
 Senator Mitchell
 Senator Nunn