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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

March 22, 1977

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CTB

Date: **AUG 09 2016** LUNCHEON WITH SECRETARY BROWN AND  
THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

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Wednesday, March 23rd, 1977  
12:00 noon (45 minutes)  
Roosevelt Room

From: Zbigniew Brzezinski

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I. PURPOSE

To underline the importance of progress towards the objective of a comprehensive test ban (CTB) treaty and provide the Chiefs an opportunity to personally convey their concerns to you.

II. BACKGROUND, PARTICIPANTS & PRESS ARRANGEMENTS

A. Background, Based on our review of the PRM / NSC-16 study on nuclear testing, there appear to be no "red flags" which would argue against a US CTB initiative, and there are good reasons in terms of non-proliferation and other objectives for proceeding. However, the Chiefs do not feel that a CTB would be in our national security interests, due to their concern about verification risks and the impact a CTB would have on our nuclear weapons design capability, stockpile reliability, and current weapons system development. Together with some of the OSD staff, they feel we should avoid arms control measures which constrain our qualitative advantages until we have made more quantitative progress in SALT or MBFR.

B. Participants: Secretary Brown, Deputy Secretary Charles Duncan, Dr. Brzezinski; Gen George S. Brown (Chairman), Gen Bernard W. Rogers (Army), Adm J. L. Holloway (Navy), Gen David C. Jones (Air Force) and Gen Louis H. Wilson (Marine Corps).

C. Press Arrangements: White House photographer only; routine announcement of the meeting.

Department of Energy Document Review	
Determination: [Circle Number(s)]	
1. Classification Retained	2. Upgraded/Downgraded To:
3. Contains No DOE Classified Info	4. Coordinate With:
5. Declassified	6. Classified Info Bracketed
7. Other (Specify):	
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III. ISSUES

The following are some of the key issues that Defense is likely to raise in this meeting:

Impact on Current Testing. Under an accelerated test program, our planned tactical warhead improvements could be completed within 12 months; 18 - 24 months would be needed to complete planned strategic improvements. Development of some of the corresponding weapon systems, however, could be completed using existing warheads, although there would be some associated penalties in terms of extra weight or nuclear materials consumption. Defense should probably be asked to review its warhead development plans, to consider the possibility of using existing warheads for some systems, and to develop prioritized test programs of six, 12 and 18 months' duration.

Decline in Stockpile Reliability and Design Capability. A CTB would probably lead to some long-term decline in the reliability of our nuclear weapons stockpile and a more serious decline in our weapons design capability. Although the national security significance of any such decline is difficult to assess, it would be important to try to ensure that the rate of decline in these areas is roughly comparable for both sides. More aggressive inspection and frequent rebuilding of existing weapons, along with appropriate incentives for our scientists, could help to solve these problems.

Peaceful Nuclear Explosives (PNEs). PRM 16 has also examined whether PNEs could be allowed under a CTB. Unfortunately, the technologies involved in PNEs and nuclear weapons tests are indistinguishable and no verification arrangement has been identified which would prevent acquisition of weapons-related benefits in carrying out PNEs. In addition, allowing PNEs would eliminate one of the main non-proliferation benefits of a CTB. It may be very difficult to get the Soviets to agree to ban PNEs; however, we might be able to defer PNEs for several years pending a joint evaluation of the issues involved.

Verification. Our verification capability appears adequate to verify the absence of nuclear testing down to levels of a few kilotons or lower. There are some complex cheating scenarios which might permit occasional testing up to a few tens of kilotons; however, these would involve considerable risk of detection. It is not clear that tests at levels of a few kilotons and below would have strategic significance. Intrusive measures such as on-site inspection and unmanned seismic observatories could augment our verification capability somewhat, and the Soviets have indicated some flexibility on this issue.

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Chief, RDD, ESD, WHS

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