

**Confidential 'Addition'****To A-Test Treaty****Washington**

Under an unpublicized "understanding" with Moscow worked out during the past two years, both the Soviet Union and the United States would be allowed once or twice a year to exceed the 150 kiloton limit on underground nuclear weapons tests, according to a Ford administration document now before the Senate.

The understanding on testing "mistakes," as it is officially described, amounts to a separate and, until now, confidential addendum to the Threshold Test Ban Treaty. The treaty, negotiated and signed in 1974, is now before the Senate awaiting ratification.

Under the treaty as originally negotiated and made public two years ago, underground weapons tests in excess of 150 kilotons in yield — equivalent to ten times the Hiroshima bomb — would be banned.

But the "mistakes" understanding would allow each side "one or two slight, unintended breaches per year" which "would not be considered treaty violations."

The public surfacing of what appears to be a technical loophole

in the test ban treaty comes in the wake of the disclosure last week that the Russians exploded a weapons test July 4 that may well have exceeded the 150 kiloton threshold.

News of that explosion was held closely in the administration for weeks after it was apparent that the test might have violated an informal Soviet promise not to conduct tests above the treaty threshold during the period before the treaty is ratified and in full effect.

The "mistakes" understanding was initiated by the Soviets and was described in a lengthy document submitted to the Senate along with the treaty text on July 29. The explanatory "letter of submittal," as it was called, was dated June 22 but it was not made public by the Ford administration and did not come to light until yesterday after it was published by the Senate.

As explained by a ranking administration official, the "mistakes" understanding was accepted by U.S. negotiating technicians because weapons tests often miss their intended yields by as much as ten to 20 kilotons.

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