nuclear powers have committed themselves to a 1996 target for banning the tests that over the years helped them build ever more compact, durable and finely tuned weapons.

But after 2,000-plus explosions in the Nevada desert, the central Asian steppes and the Pacific, some want the treaty to allow still more such ''activities''—tests by another name.

India is key: If it refuses to sign a treaty, its undeclared nuclear-arms program would remain beyond international controls.

The Clinton administration, split between the military and other U.S. agencies favoring a near-zero threshold, turned for help to the ''Jasons,'' a select group of independent scientists on call to advise the government.

This panel of ''wise men,'' first organized in 1958, is named after an inventive hero of Greek myth.

A knowledgeable source, insisting on anonymity, said a half-dozen Jasons—nuclear physicists—met in La Jolla, Calif., last week with government specialists to review the threshold issue.

Their talks ranged across an arcane realm where milliseconds make the difference between small ''bangs'' and unimaginable explosions.

In a two-stage thermonuclear bomb, a sphere of non-nuclear explosives is ignited and compresses an inner plutonium or uranium core to critical mass, setting off an atom-splitting chain reaction. This fission explosion compresses a second component, of light atoms, that fuse and give off heat in an even greater fusion explosion.

Minimal ''4-pound'' experiments are fission reactions aborted in their first moments. They are useful in weapon safety work—to determine, for example, that accidental ignition of the conventional explosives at only one point on the sphere produces just a small fission yield.

But Christopher E. Paine of the Natural Resources Defense Council, a Washington-based antinuclear group, says even mini-yield experiments can aid weapons development.

By stepping up to yields of several hundred tons, the ''experiments'' open many more possibilities for designers, Mr. Paine said.

For one thing, weapons scientists could monitor the complete fission stage and modify designs as a result.

A zero-yield treaty would block the plans of U.S., French and other scientists for new bomb types—warheads for earth-penetrating weapons, for example, and variable-yield warheads.

The ultimate recommendation from La Jolla may have been foreshadowed in an unclassified report last year by Jasons who advised against even the smallest-yield tests under a treaty. The safety and reliability of existing weapons can be ensured by non nuclear tests for the foreseeable future, it said.

The closed-door debates in America are of special interest in Moscow.

Some in the Russian military complex are looking for reasons to resume testing, said Vladimir Kozin, an arms-control specialist at the Russian Foreign Ministry. He said he fears the world will fall back into old habits.

''We are on the verge of reviving the arms race.''

Four declared nuclear powers—the United States, Russia, Britain and France—have observed a test moratorium since 1992. Last month, however, the French announced they would stage eight underground explosions at their Mururoa atoll site between September and next May.

The French say they need the tests to check the safety and reliability of their arsenal and to collect data, before a test ban, for later weapons work via computer simulation. But arms-control advocates say Paris mostly wants to use the tests to complete the design of a new warhead.

The U.S. government reaffirmed its adherence to the moratorium. But as attention focused on France, things were happening in Washington, too.

The United States had been expected to favor a test-ban loophole to let elementary weapons work via miniature nuclear blasts underground, with explosive yields equivalent to no more than four pounds of TNT. In late June, however, it emerged that the Pentagon wants a much higher ''threshold''—reportedly 500 tons, equivalent to the power of 300 Oklahoma City bombs.

In meetings last week, Clinton administration officials were trying to settle the U.S. policy dispute. None spoke publicly about the pending decision, but the heat was clearly on.

''There's a lot of pressure within the administration to go to a high threshold of several hundred tons,'' said one informed official.

The heat was felt all the way to Geneva.

''Several hundred tons, in my personal view, is certainly not acceptable,'' Mr. Dembinski said in a telephone interview.

India's delegate to the 38-nation talks was more direct in rejecting the idea of any tests at all.

A test-ban treaty should mean ''complete cessation of nuclear tests by all states in all environments and for all time,'' Satish Chandra, speaking for the Third World bloc, declared at one Ge-

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2099, DEPARTMENTS OF VETERANS AFFAIRS, HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND INDEPENDENT AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS BILL, 1996

Mr. SOLOMON, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 104–206) on the resolution (H. Res. 201) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2099) making appropriations for the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, and for sundry independent agencies, boards, commissions, corporations, and offices for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1996, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 1617

Mrs. SEASTRAND. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to have my name removed as a cosponsor of H.R. 1617.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

□ 2045

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HAYWORTH). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington [Mr. METCALF] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. METCALF addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. STUPAK] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. STUPAK addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

VIEWS ON BOSNIA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Colorado [Mr. MCINNIS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, Members, I would like to talk to you tonight about the situation in Bosnia and as I see the situation in Bosnia. I have spent a great deal of time since a high school graduation a couple of months ago studying exactly what the issues are that we have on the conflict in Bosnia and let me tell you what inspired me to take a closer look at exactly what kind of commitment our President has made over there in that country, what objectives we have in that country, and what results we can expect as the result of our intervention in that country.

Mr. Speaker, what inspired me to do it was when I was sitting on the platform of a graduation, having just spoken to the graduation class, and a young man, 18 years old, as he was walking across the stage to get his diploma, the person sitting next to me said, ''That young man is going into the Marine Corps, and he is proud.''

He is 18 years old and before long he could find himself committed to a country which he has never seen, probably never heard of, for a commitment that is unclear to me and unclear, I think, to many citizens in this country.

If that young man lost his life in his military service in the country of Bosnia, would I be able to go to his family, go to his mother and his father, and tell them that their son's life, or in some cases their daughter's life, was necessitated for the national security interests of this country? The answer to that is ''no,'' and I think it is clearly ''no.''

That is what has driven me to spend a few moments with you tonight to talk to you about the situation in Bosnia. Of course, the President has led you to believe that there are several objectives that they hope to obtain in Bosnia.

One is humanitarian aid. Clearly, that has been an absolute disaster. The humanitarian aid has been few and far between. It has been scarce. The winter months have kept it out. A lot of people over there are suffering, because that humanitarian aid does not make it there.

Then the other purpose they come up with is an objective to moderate the war. United States involvement through the United Nations is not moderating that war. Take a look at the headlines in the last couple of days.