# The Test Ban Treaty Amendment Conference

## A factsheet

* 118 nations, including the US, UK, and USSR, as well as all the nuclear "threshold states," (i.e. Argentina, Brazil, India, Israel, Pakistan and South Africa) will begin negotiations on 7 January 1991 to ban all nuclear weapons tests forever.

* This is the first time that multilateral negotiations on a nuclear test ban have been held. It is also the first time that non-nuclear nations have been able to "set the agenda" on nuclear arms control.

* The Amendment Conference was triggered by a group of 40 non-aligned states in 1988 and 1989, when they activated the amendment provision (Article II) of the Partial Test Ban Treaty (PTBT) and formally requested the convening of the Conference.

* The six countries which originally put forward the amendment, and which are leading this effort on behalf of the non-aligned group of states, are: Mexico, Venezuela, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Yugoslavia, and Peru.

* The convening of the Amendment Conference represents the culminination of a 6-year effort which began with a series of annual resolutions at the UN General Assembly recommending this approach be pursued.

* The negotiating conference, being held at the UN in New York, will focus on an amendment that would convert the 1963 Partial Test Ban Treaty -- which still allows underground tests -- into a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty (CTBT), banning all tests in all environments.

* The proposed amendment essentially consists of two additional protocols to the Treaty. The first would extend the Treaty's ban to include underground testing. The second, which is being submitted in detailed form prior to the January session, will deal with the verification of the Treaty.

* The US, UK, and USSR are legally obligated to negotiate a CTBT under the Partial Test Ban Treaty (1963), Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (1968), and Threshold Test Ban Treaty (1974).

* The US, UK, and USSR, as the "depositary governments" of the Treaty, have veto power at the Amendment Conference over any amendment. The US and UK have announced their intention to use their veto if the amendment comes to a vote. The USSR has stated that it would support the amendment.

* The non-aligned states will seek to block a direct vote in January on the amendment and call for future sessions of the