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Reagan wants year of dialogue

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Reagan said Wednesday night that 1985 should be "a year of dialogue and negotiations" with the Soviet Union. But he said he intends to press ahead with space-based anti-missile research even while putting his "Star Wars" plan "on the table with everything else" when arms talks resume.

The president told a nationally televised news conference that the United States will be "flexible, patient and determined" when the talks resume, with the ultimate objective of "complete elimination of nuclear weapons."

He said there would be "no preconditions" for the talks. But on one main sticking point — the \$26 billion space research effort which the Soviets want halted — the president said, "we have made it clear that we are going forward on research."

Asked whether Star Wars would be a bargaining chip, he said, "No, oh, no." Reagan said he does not like the term "Star Wars," and said his goal is to develop a moral and humane system, which would destroy weapons instead of people.

"Our objective in these talks will be the reduction of nuclear weapons.... Our ultimate objective is complete elimination of nuclear weapons," he said.

The news conference was Reagan's first in six months, and came 11 days before he takes the oath of office for a second term.

It was a session dominated by questions about the news that the United States and the Soviet Union would resume arms negotiations, but the president also discussed the domestic economy, the recent high-level staff shakeup in his administration and prospects of a summit with his Soviet counterpart.

He said he intends to press later in the year for simplification of the income tax code, but stood by his opposition to a tax increase, saying it would be "counterproductive" to the economic recovery. He brushed aside projections saying that his own deficit reduction plan would not meet his objectives. "Those projections — frankly, I pay no attention to them," he said.

The president also said that if an "overwhelming majority" of Congress proposed canceling next year's Social Security cost-of-living increases to reduce the deficit, "I would have to look at that situation and what I was faced with."

Reagan campaigned for reelection as an opponent of tax increases and reductions in Social Security benefits for current or future recipients.

Atiyeh opposes Army weapons

HERMISTON, Ore. (AP) — Gov. Vic Atiyeh says if he had his "druthers," the Army would destroy obsolete chemical weapons at the Umatilla Army Depot where

they are stored, rather than move them to a disposal plant in Utah.

The Army is studying whether to build a \$42 million facility to destroy the weapons, which contain a deadly nerve agent, or to transport them by truck, plane or train to an existing disposal plant in Tooele, Utah.

The governor, who has said he is opposed to weapons containing nerve agents, said he would rather not have the weapons in the state at all, but that decision was not up to him.

He had praise, however, for the Army's handling of the munitions. Atiyeh described their safety precautions as "meticulous."

Since November 1983, the Army has been destroying weapons leaking the nerve agent GB, chemically known as isopropyl methyl phosphonofluoridate. It is a colorless, odorless liquid that when released acts like a human insecticide. If even a small quantity is breathed in or absorbed by the skin, it will kill within four minutes. One M-55 rocket contains 10 pounds of the chemical.

A "leaking" rocket or projectile is one that shows signs of chemicals escaping within the bomb casing, said Susan Voss, an Army spokeswoman.

A mobile unit is used to remove the chemical agent from the bomb and destroy the casing. Initially, the Army identified 123 rockets, land mines and projectiles for destruction.

Since then, an additional 236 have been discovered. The team of specialists has disposed of 197 of the munitions and is expected to complete the remainder by May or June, Ms. Voss said.

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