

by balancing conventional forces is always interpreted by my critics as balancing at a higher level. Surely the purpose of MBFR is to seek a balance at a lower level, and therefore raise the nuclear threshold.

We also proposed meetings as soon as possible of the five nuclear powers so that a forum might be established wherein to negotiate global limits and, eventually, reductions to their nuclear arsenals.

We urged action to reinforce the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Preventing the spread of nuclear weapons is in the interest of superpower, middle-power and micro-state alike. And yet, as long as the five nuclear powers show little sign of initiating the reductions called for in the Non-Proliferation Treaty, we run the grave risk of seeing nuclear weapons spread to new regions and to old rivalries.

Above all, at each step along the way I urged political leaders to commit themselves personally; to put peace at the top of their agenda; to exercise the political leadership the current dangerous situation demands — to restart the dialogue between East and West.

I told President Reagan that the signals he was sending of American strength were being received in the East — but that a message of peace was not getting through. I told leaders in Eastern Europe that the harsh rhetoric of their declarations had guaranteed rejection of the Warsaw Pact's more positive proposals, and there were some.

Sign of progress

Misperceptions and mistrust on both sides run deep. But I believe we are beginning to see signs of progress.

In Goa, in November, 42 Commonwealth leaders strongly endorsed our efforts to restore East-West political dialogue and to promote negotiations among the nuclear weapons states.

In Brussels, in December, NATO foreign ministers reached a consensus on several points I have argued strenuously during the past few years — particularly at NATO summits that were held. They made a declaration which offered the East a balanced and constructive relationship; they made it clear that the West did not aspire to strategic superiority; and that the West respected the Soviet Union's legitimate security interests. These are statements out of Brussels, in December — a meeting attended by the Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs and Deputy Prime Minister; a meeting where he played an important role in getting these points accepted.

In accordance with our initiative, East and West have now agreed to resume the MBFR talks in Vienna on March 16. And they have agreed that foreign ministers should play a more active role in stimulating progress at those talks.

At our insistence, NATO foreign ministers participated early last month in the opening of the Stockholm Conference, to underline the importance they attached to high-level political dialogue. The