

In the words of the declaration issued in Brussels last month by the nations of the North Atlantic Alliance:

"We urge the countries of the Warsaw Pact to seize the opportunities we offer for a balanced and constructive relationship and for genuine detente."

It is the fear and the mistrust and the insecurity that have been building up in recent years that have been the driving force behind this conference.

Persistent and indeed escalating doubts prevail about what one side or the other intends to do with its arms. This is essentially a political issue and it constitutes the most likely basis for the outbreak of conventional war, which in turn could trigger a nuclear war.

Canada approaches the question of conventional arms in Europe from the premise that a more stable balance of forces must be established between the two alliances at the lowest possible level, if the danger of conflict is to be lessened. But how can we assure states that their security can be maintained without increasing military potentials to the dangerous levels we are witnessing today, especially in central Europe. We need to develop mechanisms which will lead to greater openness in military affairs among the participating states.

Unlike previous arms negotiations which have encountered difficulties in trying to strike numerical balances on the basis of what each side can do, our job here is to find ways of reassuring each other about what we intend to do, and more important, what we intend not to do.

This is the only way that we can break the spiral which impels states to redress perceived military imbalances, prompting their adversaries in turn to take countermeasures resulting in ever greater and increasingly unstable levels of arms.

The Prime Minister of Canada, concerned by the widening gap between military strategy and political purpose, has undertaken a personal initiative to encourage the reestablishment of political dialogue and confidence at the highest level between East and West. The leaders with whom he has met to date have agreed that there exists a pressing need to provide that jolt of political energy required to improve the climate and basis for the achievement of arms control agreements.

This conference offers an opportunity to restore political impulse to arms control in Europe because it links military and political confidence-building. For this reason, our work must be ambitious in scope, it must take into account all of the factors which are present in the current imbalance of conventional arms and which