

international disarmament organization be composed and with what powers would it be invested? What would be the shape of arrangements for keeping the peace in a disarmed world? In sum, what would be the impact of this ambitious concept on the security — not to speak of the sovereignty — of the parties at the end of the day?

In the fulness of time we have to find answers to these questions. But the fact remains that the answers have so far eluded us. It was natural, therefore, that we should have lowered our sights to the more practical aim of making progress towards a disarmed world by building it brick by brick.

This is the course we have pursued over the past decade or so. Over that period, we have managed to negotiate a number of instruments of arms control on which we can look back as useful milestones in the construction of an international security system. As a result, the deployment of nuclear weapons on the seabed and in outer space has been precluded; biological weapons have been prohibited; environmental warfare has been outlawed in large measure; agreements have been reached to ban nuclear tests in all environments except underground, and to halt the proliferation of nuclear weapons to countries not yet possessing them. These are not negligible measures, even though all militarily-significant states have not yet adhered to them.

The measures we have taken are sometimes described as peripheral. I believe that to call them peripheral is seriously to underrate them. They are a great advance over declarations of intention because they deal with capabilities and they are, therefore, verifiable, which intentions are not. They have an effect on the arms race by closing off certain options. It is true that the measures taken so far have foreclosed options that were, in large part, hypothetical. But they do set the stage for an attack on the heart of the arms race — which is how to foreclose options that are real and, in the absence of restraint, inescapable.

**Nuclear-arms
race**

Against this background, let me turn to the nuclear-arms race. The preservation of peace and security between the nuclear powers and their allies today rests primarily on the mutual balance of deterrence between the two major nuclear powers. Simply put, that balance means that any act of nuclear war by either would be incalculable folly. Nevertheless, the apparent success so far of this system in preventing a global war should not close our minds to the problems it raises.

What particularly concerns me is the technological impulse that continues to lie behind the development of strategic nuclear weaponry. It is, after all, in the laboratories that the nuclear-arms race begins.

The new technologies can require a decade or more to take a weapons system from research and development to production and eventual deployment. What this means is that national policies are pre-empted for long periods ahead. It also complicates the task of the foreign-policy-maker because of the difficulty of inferring current intentions from military postures that may be the result of decisions taken a decade earlier. Thus, however much governments declare that they intend to pursue a policy of peace, their declarations cannot help but be called into question: for they have
