

As we observe United Nations Disarmament Week beginning on October 24, in this the International Year of Peace, recent international events lead to a renewed sense of optimism and hope.

Over the Thanksgiving weekend, the leaders of the United States and the Soviet Union met in Reykjavik to give impetus to the Summit process. At Reykjavik, significant progress was made on a whole range of questions relating to nuclear weapons and testing, involving significant reductions in the levels of several categories of nuclear weapons, and mutual acceptance of a step-by-step process for reducing nuclear tests, leading eventually to a complete cessation of tests once nuclear weapons had been abolished. While key issues remain unresolved - particularly in regards to the limits on permissible research under the ABM treaty - we have nonetheless seen remarkable progress at Reykjavik that will be built upon by both countries in the Geneva negotiations on nuclear and space arms.

At Stockholm, Canada recently joined in the consensus decision to adopt an agreement concluding the Conference on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe. This agreement is the first multilateral arms control/security agreement adopted in over a decade and is of major political and military significance for Europe. It follows three years of negotiation by the 35 participating states of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) to develop confidence and security building measures governing military activity in Europe. These measures will impart a new openness and predictability to military affairs in Europe.

We are also pleased by recent progress in other areas, including discussions at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva concerning a global chemical weapons ban. Canada also took part in the Second Biological and Toxin Weapons Review Conference in Geneva in September. We are pleased by the strong reaffirmation of the principles of the Convention that was included in the Final Declaration of the Review Conference that was adopted by consensus.

These are all encouraging developments. Yet it cannot be denied that the goal of greater international security at lower levels of armaments, both nuclear and conventional, is not one that is easily attained. It requires patience, perseverance and the exercise of political will by all parties concerned. For its part, Canada will continue to make its contribution to this process. We will continue to pursue the Canadian Programme of Action for the remaining half of the Disarmament Decade, which focuses on practical solutions to arms control problems that would thereby lay the groundwork for the climate of trust necessary to successful arms control agreements. As part of this programme, the Government provides \$1 million annually to the Verification Research Unit in the Department of External Affairs. This Unit recently organized a technical workshop on seismic data exchange involving representatives of 17 countries, as part of Canadian efforts to promote means of verifying an eventual comprehensive test ban (CTB) treaty.