



Statement of October 18, 1985, on the State of the Negotiations

"As we approach a pause in our work, it is not inappropriate that we should stand back for a moment to survey what we have done, what we have not done, and what we may be about to do, if we can believe our own words about the political importance of this Conference in the total system of East-West relationships in all their complexity.

Almost two years ago, our Foreign Ministers assembled in this hall in an international atmosphere of apprehension and uncertainty. Surveying the sombre horizons of the moment, the Foreign Minister of Canada remarked: 'Never has a Conference been more urgently required than this one. And never have expectations and hopes been greater for a successful outcome.' Fortunately the gloomy horizons of those dark days of January 1984 have brightened somewhat. But our task has not changed in the slightest; nor has our time frame. Are we making the best use of the time and the political impulses we have been given? With about a year to go, if we are to come to a satisfactory result here by the autumn of next year, my Delegation views the working mode inaugurated this week with a sense of relief.

We sense relief that the procedural agreement finally adopted at this session marks a watershed at the Conference, which has already taken too long to get down to exchanging ideas in concrete form. The agreement could further our task of achieving the concrete result defined by our mandate, which enjoins us to devise measures that will increase confidence and security.

But has this breakthrough we have now made been accompanied by a renewal of our sense of urgency corresponding to the importance of our mandated tasks — because the time remaining to us is so short?

The procedural agreement is not a panacea. It will not guarantee that we

make progress. We now have to seize the opportunity which is long overdue to get down to the concrete exchange of ideas in specific terms that will lead quickly to drafting; to move the process of discussion to the process of forming text even if in fragmentary and preliminary form. We have to translate impressions of flexibility into concrete terms that can be written down even if it will be subject to review in broader context. We have to clear away the remaining underbrush in order to lay down roads leading in the direction that has been chartered over the past almost two years.

Although this is not always self-evident to the media — and it is not easy to explain it to them and others — we have in fact accomplished a lot in clarifying concepts, some of which are highly complex. I believe we have understood each other's positions pretty well, and as a result we have been able to begin looking beyond our own respective positions in search of common interests.

We have found some. For instance, my Delegation has repeatedly referred to CSBMs as 'disincentives to aggression'; other Delegations have called them 'operational barriers to the use of force'; recently, it was suggested that the CSBMs are 'safety fuses'. These expressions are different, but I think the meaning is the same. The job now is to abandon the metaphors and elegantly turned phrases, and begin drafting the details in order to grasp and commit to text the common ground implicit in our different approaches.

We had thought, too, that by now we had established enough confidence between and among us to realize that military affairs can and must be demystified, that secrecy is the enemy of confidence, and that transparency is not the same as espionage. We had thought there had been a wider acceptance of the view that information on military affairs should become the subject of regular and cooperative and open exchanges among governments.

Most recently, we have noted that apparent and gratifying convergence of view that has emerged on the notion of annual forecasts — although much discussion still seems necessary on the circumstances in which this concept is to be applied.

Although my Delegation, along with others, continues to doubt the value of codifying purely declaratory policies, we have agreed that in supplementing concrete CSBMs there will be a role for a reaffirmation of the principle of refraining from the threat or use of force. While recognizing that other critical factors involved in the threat or use of force are being dealt with in appropriate forums, we have agreed to focus on a major problem at Stockholm: the threat posed by conventional forces in Europe, as defined in the mandate of the Conference.

We have all agreed that it would be useful to conduct at least one week of informal, exploratory talks before the end of this session. The resulting experience has not relieved, but rather enlightened, our sense of urgency. On the one hand, some Delegations say that conditions are ripe for beginning to draft a reaffirmation of the principle of refraining from the threat or use of force. On the other hand, they say that consideration cannot be given to measures of information and verification until the content of the measures of notification is determined. And that content is in dispute because the same Delegations continue to interpret the mandate in a way that extends the zone of application of CSBMs to include activities that fall outside of it. Such a line of argument can surely have no other effect than to delay us — or even bring us to a standstill.

Our main achievement over these long months of discussion has been to identify an adequate basis — and I believe we may now have done so — for designing a set of CSBMs which would reduce the risk of military conflict in Europe. We must now spare no effort — and impose on ourselves no artificial time limits for those efforts — to ensure that a substantial result at Stockholm is achieved prior to the Vienna CSCE follow-up meeting."