

We are faced with a situation where the CCD has not been able to make any discernible progress on the main items before it. This is a distressing situation. However, in order to come to a balanced assessment of the wider prospects for arms control, I think it is necessary to look beyond the CCD to other bodies or negotiations that are now taking place. It is fair to say that outside the CCD there have been some encouraging developments.

The world can only welcome the efforts that are being undertaken by the super-powers to avert the risk that differences between them could lead to nuclear war. I have in mind the agreements signed in Washington last June, and the resumption of strategic-arms-limitation talks with a view to completing the Moscow agreements of 1972. Progress in the talks is vital to world security.

While the need to reduce the danger of strategic nuclear confrontation between the super-powers must remain a principal objective, a formidable and related problem is to reduce the major military confrontation in Central Europe, and to devise stabilizing measures that can reduce tensions in that area. In a few days time, representatives from European and North American states with forces in Central Europe will enter into negotiations in Vienna with a view to bringing about mutual reductions of forces and armaments and associated measures. My Government will participate actively in these talks, and looks to them to bring about an increased sense of security and a reduction of tension, first of all in Europe but also in the rest of the world. The talks on force reductions in Central Europe, like those on Strategic Arms Limitations (SALT), deal with the essential elements of the security of states; they cause very serious problems for all participating countries. At the same time, however, they hold open the prospect -- if they can be brought to a successful conclusion -- of the most far-reaching and significant arms-control measures yet achieved. On the same continent, the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, while mainly concerned with other matters, is giving attention to military aspects of security in Europe, and in particular to certain confidence-building measures that could reduce the possibility of misunderstanding ensuing from military activities.

Other regional arrangements of various kinds can also have a fruitful role to play in the search for global arms control, since they can be designed to meet needs and take advantage of opportunities that may be different in various parts of the world. A pioneering venture of this kind is the treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons in Latin America. Since none of the states of that area possesses nuclear weapons, the co-operation of existing nuclear-weapons states is an important factor in its effective implementation.