

the INF agreement, and reach a similarly successful conclusion to the strategic arms reductions (START) talks. As significant reductions in strategic offensive weapons would have implications for Canada, given our geographic position between the superpowers, we are following this particular aspect of the Geneva NST closely.

A resolution of differences between the USA and USSR on space/defence issues is directly related to START. The initial goal of the USA in Geneva to engage the USSR in a discussion of the relationship between strategic offence and defence has, with patience, begun to produce results. We are pleased both sides are now agreed that a separate agreement on space/defence will be developed.

Canada regards US research on ballistic missile defence as prudent in light of Soviet activity in this area, a fact finally acknowledged by General Secretary Gorbachev only recently. While Canada has not signed a government-to-government agreement with the United States on SDI, Canadian firms are free to pursue contracts with the Strategic Defense Initiative Office should they so wish.

In the post-INF environment, the relationship between the nuclear and conventional balance of forces has assumed added significance. The necessity of redressing the conventional force and chemical weapons asymmetries favouring the East in Europe has become of paramount importance. Canada has been an active participant in multilateral fora addressing conventional arms control. We are actively engaged in the preliminary discussions now under way in Vienna among the 23 nations of NATO and the Warsaw Pact, which are aimed at consideration of a mandate for new comprehensive arms reductions negotiations covering the whole of Europe. Concurrently, in Vienna, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe follow-up meeting is discussing security issues and confidence-building measures. In addition, Canada is involved in the negotiations on a global chemical weapons ban currently under way in the UN Conference on Disarmament in Geneva.