

We are meeting here in Stockholm at a time when the dialogue on security in East-West relations has all too frequently been little more than a series of discordant pronouncements. Critically important negotiations on which great hopes had been fixed have been broken off, suspended or interrupted.

Concrete results seem as remote, as unattainable, as ever.

Let us all acknowledge the futility of acrimonious rhetoric, and let us acknowledge the need to restore dialogue -- and not only restore it, but deepen it.

Never has a conference been more urgently required than this one. And never have expectations - and hopes - been greater for a successful outcome.

To survey the condition of the world today is not a happy task.

Whichever way we turn, suspicion, distrust and tensions criss-cross our perspectives in a frightening manner.

And sharpened tensions have been accompanied by mounting rhetoric which, depressingly, seemed at times to have replaced the forthright dialogue by which nations customarily communicate their hopes and fears to each other.

Before this conference began, we had come close to a halt in our efforts to find more civilized ways of living with each other and talking to each other.

Since we last met in Madrid, there have been a number of developments which have made understanding and accommodation between East and West more difficult to achieve. In particular, the decision of the Soviet Union and its allies to suspend their participation in the major East-West arms control negotiations is most regrettable. We express this regret, not in the spirit of recrimination, but because we are convinced that sustained dialogue and the constructive pursuit of equitable and verifiable arms control agreements offer the best way to avert the risks of armed conflict.

We in the West demand respect for our legitimate security interests and are determined to ensure our security on the basis of a balance of forces at the lowest possible level. By the same token, however, we assert our respect for the legitimate security interests of all other countries.

It is in this spirit of mutual interest and mutual respect that we call for the resumption of East-West arms control negotiations at the earliest possible moment. For our part, we are ready and willing to begin again now.