

First, the existence of nuclear weapons and the incalculable consequences of their use, even on a limited scale, have proved to be an effective deterrent for over 30 years. The fact that either side can now absorb a first strike and still respond with devastating effect has caused each side to proceed with caution and to avoid confrontation in times of crisis.

Agreements
respected

Second, existing agreements are being respected. In accordance with the first Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT I), which includes the Antiballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty and the Interim Agreement on Offensive Arms, both the Soviet Union and the United States have taken steps to dismantle strategic systems. The U.S.S.R. has dismantled a number of "Yankee" class submarines and the U.S. is dismantling its *Polaris* subs as new *Trident* submarines are being put into service.

Third, although considered "badly flawed" by critics, SALT II is being largely implemented by both sides. In a recent speech President Brezhnev expressed his willingness "to preserve" the positive aspects of previous agreements. President Reagan has welcomed Mr. Brezhnev's statement and has indicated that U.S. policy is to take no action that would undercut existing agreements provided the Soviet Union exercises equal restraint.

Finally, two negotiations on nuclear weapons are underway in Geneva. I don't need to rehearse for this specialized audience the details of the positions put forward by the United States, which in the case of intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF) have been worked out in consultation with allies, including Canada.

Criticism
of Western
position

Numerous criticisms have, as you know, been levelled at the Western position in both sets of negotiations, the main one being that by concentrating on those forces where the U.S.S.R. has superiority the Western positions are manifestly unfair, if not non-negotiable. My answer to this criticism is two-fold. First, our prime objective is to create a greater degree of stability, and consequently it makes sense to concentrate in the first instance on those systems which have created a high degree of imbalance and are destabilizing — the *SS-20s* in the European theatre and heavy Soviet *ICBMs* with multiple warheads in the intercontinental theatre. Second, the U.S. has made clear in the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) talks that other systems of direct concern to the Soviet Union (heavy bombers and submarine-launched ballistic missiles) are also negotiable. Most important, the West is seeking in these talks actual reductions. One should not lose sight of the fact that both of the SALT agreements established limits. They didn't result in any significant reductions in existing forces, and in some respects allowed the parties to increase up to the agreed limits. Frankly, from the reports I have received to date on the INF and START talks, I am impressed by the serious and businesslike approach of both sides.

The Vienna talks on force reductions in Central Europe are in their ninth year but
