

This technical work has made possible diplomatic initiatives at the U.N. that have led to increasing support for a Canadian-sponsored consensus resolution on verification; the first ever substantive discussion on verification was held last May at the U.N. Disarmament Commission, where Canada chaired a Working Group. This Group developed, again by consensus, an illustrative list of 10 principles that advanced the international community's understanding of how to apply verification. For example, the agreement on the necessity of on-site inspections has a direct bearing on the INF agreement and a Chemical Weapons Treaty. This activity has led U.N. Secretary-General Perez de Cuellar to suggest that advancement of verification be highlighted at the U.N.'s Third Special Session on Disarmament (UNSSOD III) in 1988.

UNSSOD III, which will be held for four weeks, beginning May 31, will provide another important opportunity for Canada to contribute to the international advancement of disarmament. UNSSOD I, in 1978, was a major achievement because it produced, by consensus, a 129-paragraph Final Document containing a Programme of Action dealing with nuclear weapons, other weapons of mass destruction, conventional weapons, and reduction of armed forces. But the international climate deteriorated and UNSSOD II, in 1982, was barely able to reaffirm the validity of the Final Document. A World Disarmament Campaign was started, to which Canada has been a leading contributor. But the 1980's have been virtually barren of any significant disarmament accomplishment -- until this moment of the Washington Summit.

In this new atmosphere, the expectations for UNSSOD III are bound to rise, but I believe a limited goal, capable of being achieved, would be far better than setting our sights too high, with the inevitable depression caused by failure. More years of step-by-step gains are needed to build an international climate supportive of a comprehensive programme for disarmament. The Third Special Session should pursue those points that can be agreed on, thus building a cooperative climate emphasizing radical reductions of nuclear weapons, more confidence-building measures, a greater commitment to compliance, and the advancement of a verification process to serve specific treaties.