

equitable formula for the radical reduction of nuclear forces and on the appropriate relationship between offensive and defensive strategies and systems will remain the key challenges.

We welcome the broad ranging proposal issued last week by General Secretary Gorbachov and its reaffirmation of the Soviet Union's commitment to nuclear disarmament. That is the most recent in a long history of suggestions, by both superpowers, on how to achieve general and complete disarmament. In this context conventional arms, where the Soviet Union has an overwhelming superiority, will also have to find their place. The Soviet Union has the opportunity to address this imbalance in its response to the Western proposal, tabled in Vienna last month, at the talks on Mutual Balanced Force Reductions.

The Soviet Union does not address the issue of missiles deployed in Asia. But we take satisfaction from the fact that Mr. Gorbachov seems to be moving closer to President Reagan's 1981 zero-zero proposal on the elimination of intermediate-range missiles in Europe. The explicit Soviet recognition of the importance of verification in the negotiation of arms control is gratifying, as is the apparent movement towards long-standing Western positions on the need for on-site inspection. The exact nature of what the Soviets will accept in this regard will have to be determined. We also note potentially constructive references to issues before other arms control forums.

It is, of course, too early to offer more than this tentative assessment of the proposals. They contain some intriguing new elements alongside well-worn positions and some disturbing preconditions that could hamper negotiation. They clearly warrant very serious consideration, but there are also many aspects that require clarification in the on-going negotiations. The real test of the Soviet Union's commitment to radical and verifiable arms reductions will come when it moves from the stage of public diplomacy to the confidential confines of the negotiating room.

The Geneva Summit and the decision to regularize this high-level contact improve the prospects for progress in arms control. Besides bringing leaders together, regular meetings build in an annual accounting of progress on arms control and encourage leaders to resolve issues which negotiators cannot.

Through the channels open to us, Canada will actively encourage the conduct of serious and constructive negotiations. The House should note the extraordinary degree