

The Prime Minister today issued the following statement on the successful conclusion of the Reagan-Gorbachev Summit.

On Tuesday December 8, President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev signed an historic agreement to eliminate intermediate range nuclear missiles. I am sure that all Canadians applaud this treaty as a pragmatic step towards a better and safer world. It is a celebration of common sense over adversity.

The agreement requires the complete dismantling and destruction of thousands of nuclear weapons. For the first time in the nuclear age, a whole class of superpower weapons will not be merely limited, but eliminated completely.

President Reagan can justifiably claim great success. It was he who provided the vision in his zero option proposal of 1981. It was he who held firm against those who wanted to freeze these weapons at levels still threatening to the West. It is he who has had the courage to distinguish between firmness and intransigence.

However, we must not hesitate to give Mr. Gorbachev his full share of the credit. It took a new kind of Soviet leader to undo his predecessors' decision to introduce those missiles in the first place. And it has taken a new Soviet leader to realize that a more stable world is possible through mutual reductions in military might.

We welcome the new spirit as well as the tangible achievements.

The agreement introduces the most stringent verification measures yet seen. For the first time, American and Soviet inspectors will be stationed on each other's territory. Measures like these are essential, not only to ensure compliance but to build trust. This precedent will be extremely valuable for future arms-reduction accords.