

Last weekend the United States and the Soviet Union brought an historic disarmament agreement tantalizingly close to achievement. Since then, both superpowers have informed the world that they will persist in this effort and build on the progress achieved at Reykjavik. The negotiators have already resumed their meetings in Geneva.

These are the highly significant developments that have produced a renewed atmosphere of hope as the First Committee begins its deliberations. For, as Prime Minister Brian Mulroney told the Canadian Parliament, the elements are in place for an ongoing civilized dialogue at Geneva and, hopefully, one which will result in General Secretary Gorbachev coming to the United States as agreed upon. The Prime Minister added:

"There are stumbling blocks on both sides. That is what negotiations are all about, sitting down with open minds, knowing the objections on both sides and trying to effect an honorable compromise."

The Canadian government hopes that people of goodwill will achieve a substantive accord, which could be signed at an early summit. Arms control, however, is a fragile process. Its environment must be protected. It is therefore doubly important that all actions be resisted which might be seen as weakening or unravelling the existing international framework on which East-West relations and arms control are built. Compliance with existing agreements is essential.

It is a reality of our time that the USA and the USSR will determine the major aspects of any international framework for global security. But security is everyone's business.--All of us have a stake in international security and all of us have a responsibility to play a constructive role in the arms control process.

Canada will press on with constructive work in every multilateral forum that, one day, must achieve the basis for a world community freed from the weapons of mass destruction.

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