

**Verifiable
arms control
agreements**

An important achievement of UNSSOD II was its reaffirmation of the Final Document of UNSSOD I. The Program of Action in that Final Document highlighted the importance of the negotiating process, as did the many world leaders who addressed the Special Session.

In his address Prime Minister Trudeau seized the occasion to call again on the nuclear powers to negotiate four verifiable arms control agreements which, in their combination, would halt the technological momentum of the nuclear arms race. They are: a comprehensive nuclear test ban; a ban on the flight-testing of all new strategic delivery vehicles; a ban on the production of fissionable material for weapons purposes; a limitation and eventual reduction of military spending for new strategic weapons systems. This strategy of suffocation, the Prime Minister stressed, is not in competition with current negotiations on reductions of all nuclear weapons. To underline this point, he proposed that the strategy be enfolded into a policy of stabilization which has two complementary components: the current negotiating approach aimed at achieving a stable nuclear balance at lower levels; and the strategy of suffocation aimed at inhibiting the development of new nuclear weapons systems.

Canadian statements in the working groups and the Committee of the Whole underlined Canada's flexibility and desire to search for consensus language on such agenda items as a comprehensive program of disarmament, enhancement of the effectiveness of disarmament machinery, and a world disarmament campaign. It was a Canadian informal paper which formed the basis of deliberations on a world disarmament campaign, and sustained Canadian efforts played no small part in the consensus achieved on the conduct of the campaign. Canada was also active in its traditional role of chairman of the Barton Group, the informal consultative body of 20 like-minded Western countries. Attached to our delegation were 19 parliamentary observers and 15 consultants drawn from non-governmental organizations and universities. In addition, the Canadian delegation provided regular briefings for members of Canadian non-governmental organizations attending the Special Session.

Although the second Special Session on Disarmament didn't achieve all that many people and governments hoped for, it did serve to focus attention on the crucial and often complex arms control and disarmament issues of our time. It also served, I believe, to underline the extent to which an exceedingly heavy responsibility rests with those countries which have embarked on serious arms control negotiations.

While the picture may not appear as bright as many would like, I'm nevertheless hopeful about the future. I believe that the superpowers themselves want to avoid moving in the direction of nuclear confrontation and that each can see their national interests being served by agreements.

Why, you may ask sceptically, am I so persuaded?