

For some 40 years the developed world concentrated its attention, its energy, its ingenuity, on managing superpower rivalry. The goal was to avert another world war and, in that respect, we were successful.

But, the legacy of our efforts during the Cold War is mixed. It has left us with a number of serious problems, not the least of which are vast arsenals of strategic and conventional weapons. But more positively, it has left us with sophisticated alliances and global crisis management systems -- possibly somewhat too primitive -- to address the new reality.

In recent years, some of the worst excesses of the Cold War era have been addressed. We have worked hard to make real progress on nuclear non-proliferation, arms control, verification and confidence-building.

The signings of the START Agreement and the Chemical Weapons Convention offer glimmers of hope that we are headed in the right direction.

But, we have more -- much more -- to do, especially in light of the diversity and magnitude of the new challenges we face.

Today, the international community is called upon to intervene in a multitude of localized or regional conflicts caused by ethnic and religious hostility, the re-emergence of virulent forms of nationalism, famine and the abuse of human rights.

It was with these new threats to international peace in mind that the UN Secretary-General put forward his Agenda for Peace. I have, at every available opportunity, including at the UN General Assembly last year, expressed Canada's support for this report -- the most comprehensive since the Charter -- because I believe that it maps out creative and effective approaches to international peace and security.

I know that many of you are familiar with the Agenda for Peace, so I will not go into great detail about it tonight. The background paper provided to you goes into much greater depth. However, I do think it is useful to recap briefly the distinct approaches the Secretary-General has outlined, if only to ensure that in our discussions we are all using the same vocabulary.

First, peacekeeping -- something we are very familiar with in this country, thanks to Lester Pearson. Peacekeeping usually involves military and civilian operations that are carried out with the consent of the parties to a dispute. It may also include assistance to resolve the dispute, such as the missions in Angola and El Salvador. But even this basic definition has been expanded in recent initiatives -- for example, with the provision of military escorts for humanitarian aid in the former Yugoslavia.