

For Canadians, no duty is more challenging than to contribute constructively to peace among nations. In a world threatened by the spread of arms, we are one country who, decades ago, chose deliberately not to acquire nuclear weapons. We had the capacity. We made the choice, not as a gesture, but as a practical contribution to the control of arms. That is part of the character of Canada.

One of the first acts of this government was to reconstitute the Consultative Group on Disarmament and Arms Control Affairs. On October 31st, meeting with that Group, the Prime Minister spelled out six Canadian goals in arms control and disarmament:

- (1) negotiated radical reductions in nuclear forces and the enhancement of strategic stability;
- (2) maintenance and strengthening of the nuclear non-proliferation regime;
- (3) negotiation of a global chemical weapons ban;
- (4) support for a comprehensive test ban treaty;
- (5) prevention of an arms race in outer space; and
- (6) the building of confidence sufficient to facilitate the reduction of military forces in Europe and elsewhere.

A year ago, in a statement in Parliament, I expressed the government's satisfaction at the agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union to resume negotiations in Geneva. The decision to meet again, and to expand the agenda to encompass the prevention of an arms race in outer space and its termination on earth, was an act of confidence and statesmanship. These negotiations have been underway for nine months now.

As I said last year, we should be under no illusion that the course at Geneva will be an easy one. It will be long and arduous. We are encouraged by the signs of progress, in particular, the tabling last fall of detailed American and Soviet proposals which contained some important common features: a 50% reduction of nuclear arsenals, limits on warheads as well as launchers, and sublimits on ICBM warheads. We hope that, in this International Year of Peace, the experienced negotiators of both sides will be able to enlarge significantly on this common ground. Agreement on an