

As the programme is presently understood, research on SDI does not in and of itself contravene the provisions either of the 1967 Outer Space Treaty or of the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, both of which Canada strongly supports. In light of significant Soviet advances in ballistic missile defence research in recent years, and deployment of an actual ballistic missile defence system, it is only prudent that the West keep abreast of the feasibility of such projects.

However, actual development and deployment of space based ballistic missile defence systems by either side would transgress the limits of the ABM Treaty as currently constituted. That could have serious implications for arms control and would therefore warrant close and careful attention by all concerned. We welcome in this regard President Reagan's affirmation that the USA would not proceed beyond research without discussion and negotiation.

We should be under no illusion that the course charted at Geneva will be an easy one. It won't be. What we are witnessing now is the beginning of a long and sensitive process. The conduct of Canada should be calculated to encourage the success of that process. Nothing is more important than that the two nuclear superpowers agree on means to end the arms race.

For our part, Canada will continue to work actively -- in the United Nations, in NATO, and elsewhere -- to make practical progress on arms control, and to improve understanding between East and West. The agreement at Geneva, after a long and dangerous stalemate, offers a new chance, and the world cannot waste that opportunity.