

History has taught us painfully that confidence and stability in one region of the world cannot remain unaffected by distrust and instability in another quarter of the globe. To ensure that confidence prevails in Europe, the participating states must accept that the same rules of conduct must apply elsewhere. In the absence of such an understanding, and of any clearly-defined boundary between the pursuit of national interests and the practice of restraint, the policy that we have called détente will inevitably be undermined.

The alternative to détente, the most basic concept of which is the avoidance of resort to armed conflict, is something none of us can contemplate with equanimity. But this irreversibility does not necessarily apply to the apparatus of East-West co-operation, which has grown up around, and as valued part, of détente. Measures which my Government, and other governments represented here, were obliged to take in response to the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, demonstrate this fact clearly enough.

The shadow of Afghanistan will inevitably chill détente as long as Soviet troops remain there. My Government believes nevertheless that East and West must share an interest in maintaining a balance of military potential and, accordingly, will continue to follow policies aimed at reducing tensions and expanding co-operation in a process which must be reciprocal, global and indivisible. But if this is what détente means, we intend to ensure that it rests on a firm foundation of deterrence.

Mr. Chairman, it is clear that we shall not be able to increase confidence in the political sphere as long as the build-up of arms continues unabated. Political détente and the deceleration of the arms race are inseparable. Confidence created by each has a mutually reinforcing impact on the other.

Looking at the Final Act, we find that its provisions regarding questions of improving military security are modest. Nonetheless, the confidence-building measures instituted in Helsinki can contribute to a more stable environment in Central Europe, the most acute area of potential armed confrontation.

The experience we have gained over the past five years with confidence-building measures has been positive. It encourages us to explore the suggestion in the Final Act that they could be developed and enlarged in order to strengthen confidence. The adoption of more developed and