

Canada is committed to collective security. We helped create the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and our active membership is a cornerstone of our foreign policy. We believe strongly that collective security and arms control are mutually reinforcing concepts. Our aim is the reduction of nuclear as well as conventional arsenals to the lowest possible level.

The critical problem in achieving this aim today is the lack of East-West confidence, particularly between the Superpowers themselves. Building confidence is the fundamental prerequisite for reducing tensions, both generally and in specific regional conflicts. And increased confidence is the essential underpinning for progress on arms control and disarmament.

For confidence to be increased, compliance with existing agreements is critical. We are concerned over Soviet lack of compliance with the Helsinki Final Act and the Madrid Concluding Document. By lack of compliance -- let me be specific -- I am referring to Soviet violations of human rights, and the continuing Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. Besides wishing to see progress in the security field, Canada's aims at the present CSCE in Vienna will be to insist on greater compliance with the existing agreements and additional safeguards for human rights.

More generally, we are working to broaden the basis of East-West relations by developing our own ties with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. What does this mean in practice? We have a regular exchange of ministerial visits, notably with the Soviet Union, but also with Eastern Europe. I myself visited the Soviet Union in 1985. In October of 1986, Foreign Minister Shevardnadze came to Ottawa. Our discussions were open, direct and constructive.

In addition, Canada and the Soviet Union have several exchange agreements on culture, in science and the humanities, agriculture, and the Arctic. The USSR remains the major market for Canadian grains. These various strands of our relationship with the Soviet Union are not only of mutual benefit but I believe they contribute to better East-West relations as a whole.

It is not going to be an easy year for arms control negotiators. Keeping the Geneva process going is critical, as is the eventual holding of another Summit. The message for both Canada and India is that multilateral consultations on arms control are absolutely essential, both to encourage the continuing Superpower talks and to tackle the range of issues that must be addressed by more than the Superpowers.