

At the centre of this multi-dimensional work is the need to improve East-West relations, which have been characterized by forty years of tension and escalating armaments. The improvement of relations and reductions in nuclear armaments are both required and would be mutually-reinforcing contributions to security. Arms control is essential to all progress. But, as we know, the field of arms control is itself highly complex, technical and, above all, political. It is easy to advocate ridding the world of nuclear weapons -- numerous proposals have been put forward since the Baruch Plan of 1946 -- but it has been very difficult to find a way of negotiating them down to acceptable levels on the basis of equality.

A significant step was taken in this direction at the first Summit meeting, in 1985, between General Secretary Gorbachev and President Reagan. In their joint declaration, the leaders agreed that "a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought." As well, they identified several areas in which the USA and USSR had a common interest in progress. These include:

- accelerated work at the nuclear and space talks in Geneva;

- the further enhancing of the Non-Proliferation Treaty;