

Mr. President

Six years ago, at the outset of the Second Special Session on Disarmament, the President of that Assembly could correctly observe that nothing had been achieved in the field of disarmament and arms control since the First Special Session.

This year, we meet in circumstances which are vastly different. The past six years have recorded progress and achievements that will have major implications for arms control and disarmament. The measure of success of this Special Session will be the extent to which our deliberations sustain further the spirit so essential to continued progress and achievement in international disarmament. We must therefore reaffirm our dedication to the success of arms control and disarmament, and pledge ourselves to advance ideas which will keep hope and progress alive.

Our efforts here can only be aided by the outcome of the recent meeting between President Reagan and General Secretary Gorbachev.

That Summit clearly demonstrated the degree of progress which has been made in East-West relations. It was the fourth such meeting between the two leaders in just over two-and-a-half years, an unprecedented pace for discussion and negotiation.

I was struck by how many observers of the Summit referred to the new agreements signed in Moscow on verification and testing as "minor" arms control measures. When we gathered in previous Special Sessions, the very notion of "minor" arms control agreements would indeed have sounded strange. We have come to have high expectations of this process.

It is in the vital Soviet-American relationship that much of the progress has been made since the last Special Session. Intensive negotiations between those two States in the last several years have brought new and historic achievements, most notably in the landmark INF Agreement signed in Washington last December and the agreement in principle to reduce strategic nuclear arms by fifty per cent. Those accomplishments present this Special Session with both the opportunity and the stimulus to pursue other avenues leading to greater international security and stability.