

Second, existing agreements are being respected. In accordance with SALT I (which includes the ABM Treaty and the Interim Agreement on Offensive Arms) both the Soviet Union and the United States have taken steps to dismantle strategic systems. The USSR has dismantled a number of "Yankee" class submarines and the USA is dismantling its Polaris subs as new Trident submarines are being put into service.

Third, although considered "badly flawed" by critics, SALT II is being largely implemented by both sides. In a recent speech President Brezhnev expressed his willingness "to preserve" the positive aspects of previous agreements. President Reagan has welcomed Brezhnev's statement and has indicated that U.S. policy is to take no action that would undercut existing agreements provided the Soviet Union exercises equal restraint.

Finally, two negotiations on nuclear weapons are underway in Geneva. I do not need to rehearse for this specialized audience the details of the positions put forward by the United States, which in the case of intermediate-range nuclear forces have been worked out in consultation with allies, including Canada.

Numerous criticisms have, as you know, been levelled at the Western position in both sets of negotiations, the main one being that by concentrating on those forces where the USSR has superiority the positions are manifestly unfair, if not non-negotiable. My answer to this criticism is two-fold. First, our prime objective is to create a greater degree of stability, and consequently it makes sense to concentrate in the first instance on those systems which have created a high degree of imbalance and are destabilizing -- the SS-20s in the European theatre and heavy Soviet ICBMs with multiple warheads in the intercontinental theatre. Second, the USA has made clear in the START talks that other systems of direct concern to the Soviet Union (heavy bombers and submarine-launched ballistic missiles) are indeed negotiable. Most important, the West is seeking in these talks actual reductions. One should not lose sight of the fact that both of the SALT agreements established limits. They did not result in any significant reductions in existing forces, and in some respects allowed the parties to increase up to the agreed limits. Frankly, from the reports I have received to date on the INF and START talks, I am impressed by the serious and businesslike approach of both sides.