

human rights, is a valid question. Nonetheless, the changes that have taken place are for the most part of the type that the West has demanded for many years. It is important not only to acknowledge these changes but also to respond in ways that could induce further change.

In another key area of international attention, the political leadership of China has passed, peacefully, to a new generation, which is stepping up China's industrial development. A remarkable technological expansion is under way, while their military forces have been cut 25 per cent.

Within the past year, I have visited both of these leading Communist countries and sensed a new dynamism that may presage a better, more stable period in international relations in which there is greater awareness that we all share the "common ground" on the planet together.

As a practical expression of this improved spirit, we have seen, throughout 1987, these developments:

- Substantial progress at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva in the negotiations for a Chemical Weapons Treaty that would ban the production of all chemical weapons.
- Preparations at the 35-nation CSCE conference in Vienna for a new forum to negotiate conventional force reductions in Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals, involving all members of NATO and the Warsaw Pact.
- The successful application of the Stockholm Confidence-Building agreement in which NATO and Warsaw Pact observers conducted 16 unprecedented on-site inspections of each other's military exercises.
- An improvement in the risk reduction operation of the USA and the Soviet Union, which aims at reducing the possibility of accidental nuclear war.