

Earlier this year at the Vienna Follow-Up Meeting of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, Mr. Clark described the MBFR talks as a pioneering attempt at conventional arms control: the positions of the two sides converged on a number of issues and the participants gained a clearer picture of what will be necessary to achieve mutually agreeable and verifiable reductions and limitations of forces and armaments in Europe.

Solid progress has also been achieved in other areas of arms control. The 1988 INF treaty between the United States and the Soviet Union has been hailed, quite rightly, as an historic achievement. The progress that these two countries have continued to make toward an agreement on major reductions in their strategic nuclear arsenals provides grounds for optimism. I was pleased yesterday to hear both Foreign Minister Shevardnadze and Secretary Baker renew their commitment to progress in this crucial area.

On another front, we believe that the political momentum developed at the Conference on Chemical Weapons in Paris, in January, will make it easier to conclude a ban on such weapons at the Geneva Conference on Disarmament. In this connection, Canada welcomes and supports the proposals relating to chemical weapons announced here yesterday by Secretary of State Baker. We look forward to working with the United States, Australia and others in the implementation of these proposals. For its part, Canada has recently made public details of its Chemical Defence Research Programme and we have invited representatives of the Soviet Union to visit the single Canadian facility at which this research is carried out.

This progress reflects the determination with which the Western Allies, including Canada, have pursued arms control and disarmament objectives throughout this decade. All too often it is forgotten that the origins of many key arms control proposals are to be found in the West. It was the unswerving determination of the members of the Western Alliance which ultimately resulted in an acceptance of the "zero option" for INF. It was in Halifax, Canada, in May 1986, that NATO foreign ministers took decisions to prepare for the negotiation of mandates and arms control proposals relating to conventional arms in Europe that have led to our meeting here today. It was our call for the elimination of asymmetries in conventional forces in Europe to which the member states of the Warsaw Pact responded in declaring a readiness to reduce their forces in Eastern Europe.