

There was mutual acceptance of a step-by-step process for reducing nuclear tests, leading eventually to a complete cessation of tests once nuclear weapons had been abolished. There was a broad convergence of view on the verification procedures to be applied to the various measures.

The fact that such detailed discussions occurred and resulted in such wide-ranging tentative agreement attests to the seriousness and dedication with which the two sides have been approaching their task. The main significance lies in the demonstration that major, negotiated reductions in nuclear arsenals need not be an impossible dream.

At Reykjavik three lessons were reinforced. The first two are: both sides are serious; and arms control is possible. But the third lesson is that arms control will not come easily. It is a deliberate and difficult process.

The more sobering element of reality as it has emerged from Reykjavik lies in the fact that the two sides remain far apart in their views on the future role of strategic defences. This is not a question of saying yes or no to SDI but of finding a way of managing the research on defensive weapons in which both sides are engaged.

A key issue between the two governments is whether research is limited to the laboratory under the existing ABM treaty. That is a treaty with two signing parties - the United States and the Soviet Union. Its text does not refer directly to research, although the private negotiating record of either side may mention research. The agreement on what precisely is intended in that treaty is for these two governments who are the parties to the agreement to work out.

It is important to note that this is a different issue from the debate we have seen in recent months over what is allowed by agreed statement "D" of the ABM treaty referring to ABM systems based on other physical principles. Our interest is to ensure strict adherence to that treaty, and continued respect by both sides for the integrity of this fundamental arms control agreement.

The situation today in no way represents a step backward from the situation as it existed prior to the Reykjavik meeting. Technological, political and legal uncertainties and disagreements have always characterized the debate on strategic defence. Even in this area, however, there has in our judgement been some movement toward better mutual understanding, in that the legitimacy of research related to strategic defence is now accepted by both sides. In a treaty that refers explicitly only to "development, testing and deployment", the issue has become, in effect, what are the limits on permissible research.