

In his report, the Secretary-General has rightly pointed to the central importance today of the question of disarmament and arms limitation, and particularly the prevention of nuclear war. Despite the considerable efforts that have been made over the years towards this crucially important objective -- and there have been some notable achievements -- there is a shared concern on the part of the international community about security. Anxiety over the threat of war has not been diminished -- and for good reason. The accumulation of weapons of mass destruction has not stopped and we are witness to the development of more and more sophisticated nuclear and conventional arms.

Over the years, the focus has been on arms control and disarmament -- on controlling and eliminating the technical means of making war. Arms control and disarmament have a simple but seductive appeal: reduce or destroy the tools of war and you will eliminate war. The problems of preserving peace and security, however, are extremely complex.

We have, of course, to continue the pursuit of ways and means of harnessing the technology that feeds arms competition as energetically as we can. In this forum our discussions take place in the context of certain given factors, particularly the established policies of our governments. We are, in a sense, captives of our histories. This is often an inhibiting element in our search for consensus. What, in essence, we are dealing with here and in other fora relates to the capabilities of nations to wage war in present circumstances. Our immediate goal is a lower level of arms and armaments at an equal or enhanced level of security.

What has been left largely to one side in our discussions is the more fundamental question of intentions which govern the use of arms. The issue of intermediate range nuclear forces in Europe, which has taken a new turn with the Soviet Union's announcement of planned additional deployments of missiles in the German Democratic Republic and Czechoslovakia, illustrates how important this question is. While understanding intentions does not automatically guarantee peace and security, we should be concerned that intentions in this crucial area of policy are not misunderstood.