

Third, an agreement to prohibit all production of fissionable material for weapons purposes. The effect of this would be to set a finite limit on the availability of nuclear-weapons material. Such an agreement would have to be backed up by an effective system of full-scope safeguards. It would have the great advantage of placing nuclear-weapon states on a much more comparable basis with non-nuclear-weapon states than they have been thus far under the dispensations of the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Fourth, an agreement to limit and then progressively to reduce military spending on new strategic-nuclear-weapon systems. This will require the development of the necessary openness in reporting, comparing and verifying such expenditures.

It is arguable that the credibility of such an agreement could be strengthened by placing the sums released from national accounts on international deposit, at least for an interim period, possibly in the form of special loans to international development institutions. Such an idea would be in line with conventional thinking about what should be done with at least some of the savings from disarmament. But I do not think it makes good sense to penalize countries that act responsibly by cutting back on armaments.

I am much more attracted by the logic of the ideas advanced earlier this year by the President of France. I believe that, if penalties are to be exacted, they should be exacted from those who, by excessive military spending and in other ways, contribute to the insecurity of others. I hope that further thought can be given to these ideas before this special session draws to a close.

A strategy of suffocation seems to me to have a number of advantages. It is not merely declaratory because it will have a real and progressive impact on the development of new strategic-weapons systems. It will have that impact in three ways: by freezing the available amount of fissionable material; by preventing any technology that may be developed in the laboratory from being tested; and by reducing the moneys devoted to military expenditure. It is also a realistic strategy because it assumes that, for some time to come at least, total nuclear disarmament is probably unattainable in practice. It avoids some of the problems encountered in the negotiations currently under way in that it does not involve complex calculations of balance but leaves the nuclear-weapon states some flexibility in adjusting their force levels using existing weapons technology. It has at least the potential of reducing the risks of conflict that are inherent in the technological momentum of strategic competition.

The ultimate intent of a strategy of suffocation is to halt the arms race in the laboratory. But an offer to halt the arms race at any stage is a step in the direction of genuine disarmament. The President of the United States has shown the way in recent weeks with his farsighted postponement of a decision to produce a special battlefield nuclear weapon. We must all hope that the response of the Soviet Union will be such as to make it possible to extend that postponement indefinitely.

Non-proliferation

So much for the vertical dimension of the nuclear problem. Let me now say a word about the horizontal spread of nuclear capabilities.