

19. What are the lessons that can be drawn from the past decade? For one, the successes have demonstrated that progress can only be made through a step-by-step process of negotiation. It is also evident that the prime goals of this special session will be different from those of previous special sessions on disarmament. At the first and second special sessions, the challenge was to get the arms control and disarmament process going. The opening of the third special session coincides, almost symbolically, with the Moscow Summit. The first goal of this special session will be to protect and enhance the current East/West process and build upon its gains. Although this process is finally working, it is fragile and will not benefit from unrealistic declarations or proposals. It is therefore incumbent on us all to work together to enhance the momentum of these negotiations so that they will produce even more significant results and, in turn, stimulate progress at the multilateral level.

20. It would be unrealistic to expect this special session in four short weeks to resolve problems which have plagued the international community for months and years. Nevertheless we should be able together to move closer to agreement or at least a meeting of minds on some of the difficult issues before us. We would expect the special session to build upon the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session (General Assembly resolution S-10/2). It provides the most comprehensive set of principles for disarmament adopted by the international community and as such is a landmark achievement.

21. A measure of the success of the third special session will be the degree to which it succeeds in finding common ground. That ground clearly will not materialize where firmly held national positions are ignored. Nor will the special session succeed in prescribing solutions which have long eluded consensus. Rather, it must place the emphasis on those areas where agreement is possible. In the Canadian view, it is far preferable to aim for modest gains, though by no means insignificant, than to adhere rigidly to positions which others cannot accept and which will lead inevitably to a polarization of the special session. A pragmatic approach is the route to a successful third special session.

22. The very essence of the arms control and disarmament process is a step-by-step approach based on the development of confidence and the enhancement of security. Nations will not disarm if their security is threatened; neither will they respond to disarmament timetables or processes in the absence of confidence-building measures and verification. If participants take these realities fully into account, the prospects for a successful conclusion to this special session will be enhanced.

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