

powers, the greater grows the desire of other countries "to go nuclear". In a world without truly effective safeguards they feel their national existence threatened. If each new nuclear weapon state prompted its neighbour to follow its example all concerned would find their security quickly undermined.

We believe that it is the very existence of nuclear explosive devices that presents the hazard to humanity and it increases in proportion to the number of countries possessing them. One need make no distinctions in terms of what countries possess such devices. The danger lies as much in the number of countries that have them as in the policies of the possessors.

If we are to avoid a nuclear catastrophe we must accept that there are practical limits to the application of the principle of non-discrimination. My Government urges the international community to accept the obligation not to contribute to the uncontrolled spread of nuclear explosive capability, and the safeguards required to ensure compliance with that obligation.

Our aim is to seek broadly international measures which will halt both the multiplication and the wider dissemination of nuclear weapons, and which will check the spread of the technology of nuclear explosive devices and the further development of that technology as applied to nuclear weapons. The Non-Proliferation Treaty, the efforts to limit strategic arms, and the achievement of a comprehensive test ban are designed to serve these objectives. As for the halting of the proliferation of nuclear weapons, all states should undertake not to transfer nuclear technology or materials except under international supervision aimed at ensuring that the transfer is not used for fabricating nuclear explosive devices. In addition, all states should place their inventories of nuclear fissile material they hold for peaceful purposes under international supervision. Nuclear weapon states should, as a first step towards this objective, place their peaceful nuclear facilities under this supervision and seek to halt their production of fissile material for weapons purposes. International supervision of fissile material is the best available means for the international community to be assured of each state's peaceful intentions. This would allow states to concentrate on the development and distribution of much-needed nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

The nuclear threat to our security may be dramatic and awe-inspiring but we cannot neglect the more prosaic but lethal threat from the use of conventional force.