

The other four aims are being pursued in related forums: the conference on disarmament in Geneva, the Stockholm conference and the mutual and balanced force reduction talks in Vienna. The Canadian delegations at these conferences are seeking, in concert with our allies, practical and equitable measures to reduce armaments and increase confidence.

I am pleased that our ambassadors who are engaged in the various disarmament negotiations are with us tonight and I am confident their contributions will both enliven and add considerably to your discussions. By way of illustration of this practical approach, Canada will provide to the UN Secretary-General, a manual of procedures for investigating allegations of chemical weapons use. We have carried out a series of discussions with non-signatories of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty to urge them to accede to this vital agreement.

At the Stockholm conference we have explored with our NATO allies new ideas on how the attainment of a substantial result can be facilitated.

Recent progress during the discussions at Stockholm portends concrete results from this important forum. At the conference on disarmament, Canada has tabled a study on the existing legal régime pertaining to outer space. This represents the first substantive contribution of any country to the work of the conference.

It is exactly through the cumulative effect of such practical measures, that progress in arms control is most surely achieved. This basic stance underlies the program of action Canada will advance throughout the last half of the second disarmament decade. One of the predominant themes in that program will be Canada's decision to focus on the vital issue of the verification of compliance with arms control agreements.

Without the knowledge that one's partners in an arms control agreement are actually honouring their obligations, the whole purpose of the agreement and, by extension, the arms control process itself, is called into disrepute. Verification is not end in itself. Verification enhances the confidence of the parties.

In so doing, it creates a sense of predictability. And predictability is one of the most important outcomes of effective arms control.

For my own part, I have concentrated on developing channels of communication with leaders from both East and West, to facilitate an exchange of ideas and to convey Canadian concerns and practical suggestions. Last month, I wrote to General Secretary Gorbachev outlining Canadian views and priorities with respect to arms control and disarmament. I have, of course, been in frequent contact with President Reagan on a range of international issues. I was pleased to participate at the meeting which he hosted last week in New York of summit heads of government to discuss the forthcoming Geneva summit.

It has been six years since the leaders of the USA and USSR have met. That is far too long in a world where superpower tensions cannot be left unattended. It would be preferable to regularize East-West summitry, to have the leaders of the USA and USSR meet, perhaps annually, to discuss problems and areas of common concern.