

held up, if you can get it moving, by blockage of one particular negotiation, nor to say that: "We will negotiate agreements and then we'll keep them on ice until we negotiate the whole series."

That would be impossibly long. These things are all linked, and yet we will have to find ways of segmenting them. That is, we will have to seek negotiations that will attack some of these problems *seriatim* and which will, you would hope, result in establishing successively lower levels of armament, but without the stability of the system being disrupted at any point. That is very schematic but nonetheless it is extremely important.

I would also say, very much as a personal judgement, that the problem is not, as some people maintain, the accumulation of weapons. It is true, notwithstanding some unilateral decisions by NATO which have, for instance, sharply reduced the number of nuclear warheads that are held in Europe - and people often do not appreciate the extent to which this has happened - that notwithstanding this fact, the level both of conventional and nuclear forces in Europe is nonetheless unprecedented, certainly in absolute terms - for conventional forces, unprecedented in peace-time. But that accumulation has not really produced an unstable system.

People sometimes argue that the very accumulation of weapons is of itself dangerous. They speak as if this inevitably produces an increased risk of war. I think not - that it depends on what weapons are being introduced and in what circumstances, and whether they are destabilizing. That is really the question. The evidence is that the system that has been created, while it is the product of some of these purely random factors like the introduction of the SS-20s, is nonetheless quite a stable system. My reason for arguing that is that, in any other circumstances, how could the European security system, if you can call it a system - it is hard to call something that is such a random construct a system, but nonetheless, let's say that in effect East and West have conspired somehow or other through a maze of reciprocal actions over the last generation to create a system - how could that system have survived crises over Berlin in the 1950s, survived the crisis in Hungary in 1956, the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, the Polish crisis of 1980-81? Over and over again, the system shows where it is unstable: that it is inherently unstable in Eastern Europe. The relationship between the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries is flawed, and there is no way that system can be stabilized, at least by consent. They have not arrived at that yet anyway. When its stability is threatened, the stability is restored by actual applications of force, or at least the threat of force, and in any other circumstances - before the age of nuclear weapons let's say - political crises of that magnitude in Europe would have brought us much closer to war than I think we have ever been.

So you could argue that in fact, however much we want to get rid of the weapons, it is quite a stable system; that it is capable of withstanding very severe shocks. So it seems to me the problem then is not the lack of stability, the problem is to retain the stability. The stability is there. It is one of the virtues of the system. I know this may seem almost a perverse logic, but I think it has some force: that the system has the virtue of stability and that we want to maintain that stability; that the criticism is that it is stability established at a very considerable political price in Eastern Europe, and it is stability established at a very high level of armament. So that the object over time is to produce a more civilized political order - and that really is what we are seeking in CSCE - and to seek through arms control and disarmament negotiations progressively to reduce the level of armaments to something that is at a more sensible level, without at any stage in the downward track destroying the stability of the system. That is really the European security programme. If you look at it in that perspective, the fact that we happen to have hold at the moment of one particular negotiation affecting one particular category of nuclear weapons strikes me almost as another one of these random happenings; it is not necessarily the point at which you