

A corner-stone of the United Nations is the second type of human right I want to discuss - the right of the people of the world to physical security. Born from the ashes of the Second World War, this organization is devoted to the peaceful resolution of differences between nations. To many people this is the sole reason for the existence of this organization, to ensure the human right to live in peace.

Here too, our record gives little cause for satisfaction. Instances of aggression of one country against another continue. As always, righteous justification is claimed by each party to the conflict. There may be righteous warriors, but there are no good wars. The people have entrusted to us the task of stopping this systematic destruction of the most fundamental of all human rights - the right to life itself. And yet armed conflict remains a sorry characteristic of international affairs.

Other related threats to our physical safety continue. The arms race, with all its costs and inherent dangers bounds apace. The spread of nuclear technology, with all the benefits it can bring, has not been paralleled by an equal commitment to a renunciation of the development of nuclear explosive capability. We know that certain states are even today working to achieve mastery in this field, not for the increased well-being its energy can bring to the people, but for the creation of an explosion - one that will quake the hearts of peace-loving people everywhere. Surely they can expect better of us.

Fortunately here, too, there are reasons for hope. The first Special Session of this Assembly on Disarmament was a success. For those who believe as I do that modern weapons are as much a threat as a protection to the security of nations, this was an encouraging step. Yet the record since that time is disappointing. The new machinery of negotiation in Geneva is blocked by rivalry and suspicion. The testing of nuclear weapons continues, despite the high priority that the Special Session gave to the ban. Preparations for chemical warfare continue; no agreement has been reached on measures to limit the use of weapons that cause unnecessary suffering; and spending for military purposes grows even larger.

Nevertheless, a hopeful sign of urgency remains. I cite the communiqué signed in Vienna last June by Presidents Carter and Brezhnev, in which they commit their governments "to take major steps to limit nuclear weapons with the objective of ultimately eliminating them, and to complete successfully other arms limitation and disarmament negotiations".

Mr. President, Canada has a particular interest in the honouring of this commitment - we are the only country that is a neighbour to both the USA and the USSR. As such we could not escape the devastation of a strategic nuclear war. Hence our specific concern.