

(Mr. McPhail, Canada)

Contact Group reports themselves contain language which can be utilized for the actual drafting of a convention. Here, I want to note -- and do so emphatically -- dedication and skill of all four contact group co-ordinators and the valuable role their groups have played in delivering over-all consensus on the document which is now before us.

I have spoken of process and method. These were aimed at achieving substantive ends. The Working Group did not solve all substantive problems. But here too, there was some progress. In certain areas, the intensive examination of comparable positions revealed greater coincidence of view than had previously been apparent; for example, agreement was reached on the use of chemical names in the declaration of stocks, and the usefulness of on-site automatic instruments in assisting other techniques of verification. In other areas, new proposals came forward, and these were incorporated into our common document. There were, for example, United Kingdom proposals for monitoring of non-production, and separate Soviet proposals on prohibition of use, on prohibition of compounds containing the methyl-phosphorus bonds, and on details required in declarations of stocks. There was a proposal by Egypt on assistance in the event of a violation. There was also the United States detailed views paper, which allowed a comparison to be made with the Soviet text, containing the outline of a treaty, tabled at last year's session. I mention only a few of the many contributions, such as those contained in a Soviet statement last week, which have been made only late in the year and will thus require further examination. The full list of such proposals appears in the Working Group's report.

But I wish to emphasize once more that there are indeed major areas where agreement must be reached for there to be success. These are clearly indicated, I think, in the document before you. The Working Group has not solved these matters, but at least unequivocal agreement has been reached on where work needs to be focused.

I am sure that among us there is no illusion that through process alone disagreements will simply fall away without hard decisions being made in capitals. Moreover, it is natural to expect that when such decisions come, they will be based on perceptions of the balance of advantage, in national security terms, of accepting in whole or in part yet to be agreed provisions which, however difficult in themselves to accommodate, are the necessary price for a greater gain.

In this context, and whatever the substantive or process achievements of the Working Group on Chemical Weapons this year, particular satisfaction should be drawn from the manner in which the Group performed its business. We dealt with problems, facts and issues. The discussion was sober and restrained. In short, the approach was businesslike. This in itself was a necessary confidence-building measure; and this reason alone justifies, I suggest, the effort we have collectively put into the Working Group's activities this year. We must build upon these efforts, and I commend for the Committee's approval, the three steps recommended by the Working Group in the final paragraph of its report, in order that a ban on chemical weapons may be finalized at the earliest possible time. In this respect, I understand that there are consultations now among a number of delegations which, when the Committee considers its own report on this matter, may permit it to have included a recommendation about the precise nature in which the negotiation may be resumed late this year or early next year, and that is a matter to which my delegation intends to revert to when the appropriate portion of the text of the Committee's report is considered.