

A number of disputes over verification have arisen in negotiations for a comprehensive test ban. The Soviet Union contends that seismic detection alone will ensure compliance with a test ban, while the West demands some form of on-site inspection in addition to national technical means of verification. The official British position is essentially that, despite recent technological developments in seismic detection, "seismology still has serious limitations as a tool for identifying nuclear explosions below a certain strength" (p. 13). No specific reference is made to the necessity of on-site inspection, but it is stressed that the verification measures used must reduce risks and provide increased confidence.

Chemical and biological weapons also pose significant problems for verification and arms control, since any prohibition of these weapons will require on-site inspection and other intrusive verification measures. Britain has suggested that agreements might proceed in stages, beginning with partial measures which require less intrusive verification schemes. A British draft convention was submitted to the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament in 1976 (see CD/512, abstract M18(G76)). It is a comprehensive proposal which is to be applied in successive phases, and would establish an international inspection body to conduct verification, inspection and data exchanges.