

The last sentence of the paragraph I have just quoted should be stressed. The form and modalities of the verification should be in keeping with the purposes, scope and nature of the disarmament agreement the observance of which it is wished to monitor. If that agreement does not exist, nor has even begun to be negotiated, it cannot be clear how studies and tests which must be carried out in a total vacuum can be useful and fruitful. It is not possible to go on working indefinitely on the basis of assumptions and out-of-date political data, as the Ad Hoc Group finds itself forced to so, as can be seen from paragraph 2 of its report.

In accordance with the broad experience already accumulated, only by making a start on substantive negotiations will it be possible to tackle all the pertinent aspects of a future agreement. And only in this context, too, will the Conference on Disarmament be able to make proper use of the technical and scientific contribution furnished by the Ad Hoc Group.

CD/PV.259

pp.16-18

Japan/Imai

17.4.84

VER,CTB

In practical terms, the foregoing would mean that we have to find an appropriate compromise between two things. One of the two is a comprehensive approach based on expressions of disarmament ideals, while the other factor is various details of actual measures, including institutions and technologies of verification. In other words, if an agreement in the abstract on comprehensive and declaratory measures can achieve a goal of truly effective disarmament, that will indeed be a very welcome situation. That this is not always the case may be clear if we take the example of the 1925 Geneva Protocol. To think that the idealism and political will will be sufficient is unfortunately optimistic in today's world, and I made this point clear in the statement I delivered in February. In order that disarmament measures can be effective and credible as an arrangement among nations, it is essential that the member States can have confidence that others are faithfully observing the terms of such conventions. This is an understandable situation when national security is involved and when science and technology of modern weapon systems have become highly sophisticated and complicated as they are today.

As I emphasize the importance of verification, I would like to hasten to add that there is a danger also of extremism in this regard as well. If one starts by assuming the occurrence of all the violations which are theoretically possible, but practically unlikely, and insists that an agreement is meaningless unless all such cases are covered, then we are overstating the virtue of verification.

I would like to refer here to some of my own experiences regarding the International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards which, as you are well aware, concern verification measures against nuclear proliferation. It took a very long time to distinguish what is useful and necessary from what may be less practical. There was a group of people who insisted that mere nominal arrangements to prevent diversion of nuclear material from peaceful to military uses were sufficient. This position was not accepted by most countries and, as a result, detailed negotiations on institutional and technical arrangements for effective safeguards took place. On the other hand, from over-eagerness scenarios were sometimes depicted which, for those who are knowledgeable in the nuclear industry, could not even be visualized as practical possibilities. What exists today as the IAEA safeguards is the product of compromise between such extreme positions. I have mentioned this example not in any way as an attempt to make an assessment of our current discussion about verification on a nuclear-test ban or the prohibition of chemical weapons, but merely to indicate that in our view this is a general point worth remembering.