

(Mr. Friedersdorf, United States)

Regarding the third and fourth essentials for verification, the Vice-President stated:

"The verification difficulties inherent in the problem of undeclared sites - determining that there are no hidden stocks and no clandestine production facilities - remain our most formidable challenge. It is formidable because the problem of undeclared sites can be resolved only if States commit themselves to a new, but absolutely necessary degree of openness."

That assessment is no less accurate today than it was five years ago. Indeed, as recognized in Working Group discussions, verification is becoming a more formidable task as a result of two continuing trends: first, the trend in the chemical industry toward versatile, multi-purpose facilities easily convertible to production of chemical weapons agents and precursors; second, the configuring of chemical facilities to comply with stricter environmental and safety standards, which makes it more difficult to distinguish a chemical facility manufacturing chemical-weapons-related products from those facilities engaged in more benign production.

To allay concerns about undeclared chemical weapons stockpiles and clandestine production, Vice-President Bush proposed the unprecedented verification procedure he called "open invitation" inspection - a mutual obligation of parties to open their territory to mandatory, short-notice, on-site inspection, as set forth in article X of CD/500.

Recognizing the intrusiveness of such inspections, the Vice-President stated that the United States was willing to pay that price because "an effective ban on chemical weapons requires this kind of 'open invitation' inspections we propose." He concluded that:

"If the international community recognizes that such a provision is the sine qua non of an effective chemical weapons ban and joins us in subscribing to it, we will not only have realized the noble longing for a treaty that actually bans chemical weapons, but we will have changed in an altogether salutary manner the way governments do business."

Thus far, the international community, as represented in our negotiations by the members and participating observers of the Conference on Disarmament, has been slow to recognize that such stringent verification measures are essential to a chemical weapons ban. Significant progress was made in that direction in August 1987 when the Soviet Union, which had been one of the most vocal opponents of mandatory, short-notice, on-site inspection, announced through its Minister for Foreign Affairs, Eduard Shevardnadze, that the Soviet Union accepted the principle of "mandatory challenge inspections without the right of refusal."

So long as the United States and the Soviet Union were advocating opposing views on this issue, some other delegations found it unnecessary to express, or perhaps even to formulate, their national positions. Shortly