

(Mr. Jessel, France)

Today everyone concedes that the elimination period, a period set by common agreement at 10 years, will raise the most difficult problems, particularly in matters of security.

Unless they are taken into account, the initial imbalances may well be maintained, or indeed increase dangerously, either quantitatively or qualitatively, over this period, and thus at some stage in the process give an unacceptable military advantage to one of the parties.

It is easy to see that a progressive, linear elimination, if that is the method chosen, is likely to lead to a danger of this sort because this type of elimination favours the strong and weakens the weak, who would lose more quickly a militarily significant retaliatory capability.

This is naturally true for equal amounts and identical toxic qualities. But the truth is naturally more complex, and a simple example will illustrate my point.

Obviously, a State whose stocks include 100,000 tons of phosgene -- bought on the world market, since hundreds of thousands of tons of this agent are manufactured every year in the world -- does not have the same chemical warfare capacity as a country which holds 100,000 tons of nerve gas which it manufactures itself. A decision to eliminate these two stockpiles according to an identical linear procedure over a period of 10 years fails to provide the desired solution -- one which would progressively lead to a balance of capacity,

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