

(Mr. Beesley, Canada)

delegation; it is inevitable that, precisely because we are making significant progress in the elaboration of a convention, the pace tends to slow down as new gains become harder and the points under negotiation more difficult to resolve. Moreover, Governments require time to reflect on the results obtained and consider the need to adapt their negotiating approaches accordingly.

The recent announcement by Foreign Minister Shevardnadze that the Soviet Union now agrees to a fully mandatory challenge inspection régime is a most important statement, even when read in the light of the five qualifying points made later by Ambassador Nazarkin in his elaboration of USSR views on this issue. Clearly, certain important details remain to be negotiated in this area, as indicated in Ambassador Ekéus' report on his consultations. Inter alia, there needs to be agreement on the precise manner in which challenges would be initiated.

It has long been agreed that allegations of the use of chemical weapons must be dealt with as promptly as possible, and that the only adequate method of determining whether or not chemical weapons have been used is on-site inspection. Canada has considered this problem in much detail and this year, together with the delegation of Norway, we have provided a paper (CD/766) proposing an annex to article IX on this important subject. We hope that it will be possible for the Ad hoc Committee to give full attention to the important question of the verification of CW use as soon as this is practicable.

We have also broken new ground in the CW negotiations this year in developing an understanding of the type of international organization required to oversee the implementation of a CW convention. Much work remains to be done before this organization can become a reality. It is critical that we thoroughly understand what we expect such an organization to do before we can complete our work on article VIII of the draft treaty. The Canadian delegation intends to contribute substantively to this as part of our work. I suggest, however, that the mere fact that we are collectively now addressing such issues is an encouraging sign and a clear mark of progress.

I now wish to speak on an issue central to the whole CW negotiation. Canada does not possess any chemical weapons, and does not intend to produce or acquire such weapons. Two working papers tabled in this forum (CCD/434 of July 1974 and CD/173 of April 1981) reported that Canadian chemical weapon stocks had been destroyed. It is not in any spirit of polemics, but with the explicit purpose of accelerating the negotiating process, that I make the plea that all other delegations note this declaration and others like it and consider making comparable declarations -- and do so as soon as possible to build up our momentum and make clear to all the world the seriousness of our intent. It goes without saying, in the light of the foregoing, that we have made very important, concrete progress in our negotiations on the chemical weapon convention during the past four years.