

J97(G77)

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Proposal Abstract J97(G77)

1. Arms Control Problem:

- (a) Nuclear weapons - comprehensive test ban
- (b) General and complete disarmament
- (c) Chemical and biological weapons

2. Verification Type:

- (a) Remote sensors
- (b) Seismic sensors
- (c) On-site inspection - selective
- (d) International control organization
- (e) International exchange of information

3. Source:

United Kingdom. British Information Services. Arms Control and Disarmament. London: Central Office of Information, October 1977. RCO 31/77 UK 1 C152, R6031.

4. Summary:

This pamphlet provides some important insights into the problem of verification as it has evolved in the post-war period. The official position of the United Kingdom on verification is also described. One of the basic problems has been a 'fundamental difference' in methods or aims between the Western nations and the Soviet Union. The Western world seems prepared to accept infringements on its sovereignty and economic organization where necessary to maintain national security; in comparison, "the Government of the USSR puts its sovereignty first and is unwilling to accept measures which may impinge upon or interfere with its rigid exercise of unimpeded state sovereignty" (p.4). It is this fundamental disagreement which has led Western countries to demand effective verification of any reduction of arms, whereas the Soviet Union has consistently refused to allow on-site inspections and other intrusive means of verification.

It was recognized early in the disarmament process that any attempt to regulate or control nuclear weapons would leave open the possibility of evasions. Consequently, disarmament negotiations began to focus on partial measures "as first steps towards the ultimate goal of complete disarmament" (p.5). Although the earliest Soviet proposals stressed the risks inherent in complete disarmament, they later insisted that comprehensive proposals be put forth in the first stages of disarmament, prior to any requirements for verification. The response of the United States, as supported by Britain, was essentially that verification must be conducted before reductions took place, to provide assurance that agreed levels are being met. The Soviet Union has consistently rejected verification prior to reductions on the grounds that this amounts to espionage and control over armaments.