

beyond its obligations under the 1925 Geneva Protocol well before the 1972 Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. In 1970 Canada declared that it never has had -- and does not possess now -- any biological or toxin weapons and does not intend to develop, produce, acquire, stockpile or use such weapons at any time in the future. That remains Canada's policy and practice today.

Only two countries - the United States and the Soviet Union - have admitted that they produce and possess chemical weapons. Other countries which possess chemical weapons should adopt that spirit of openness.

Treaties are not only pieces of paper which, once signed, simply become historical reference points. They require constant attention and care. In this spirit Canada's Verification Research Programme has sought to develop ways to investigate allegations of the use of chemical weapons. We have made the results of our work available to other nations. In 1987 Canada, along with Norway, proposed an annex to the future Convention on procedures for verification of allegations of use of chemical weapons. As well, we have fully supported the measures taken by the United Nations Secretary-General to investigate past allegations.

The test of any arms control agreement is how well it is respected. The purpose is to increase everyone's security, and that will happen only if we all have confidence that others will honour the rules we honour. There is agreement here on the urgent need for a ban that works. There has been real progress at Geneva in negotiating a Convention. Now it is time to resolve the important outstanding issues.

Verification of a chemical weapons ban will be complex, expensive and intrusive. The price of a treaty, in human endeavour, in self-limitations on sovereignty and in resources will be substantial. But experience shows that the cost of failing will be far greater.

In the meantime, there is a need for national self-restraint. It is of great concern to my government that the spread of chemical weapons has continued and that they have again been used. We considered it a necessary and logical consequence of our policy on chemical weapons to ensure that Canadian industry not contribute, even inadvertently, to any use of chemical weapons. We hope others will do the same.

There is no doubt that there is a collective international desire for a comprehensive ban on chemical weapons. This is demonstrated each year at the United Nations General Assembly through a consensus resolution which Canada and Poland, among others, sponsor. This issue concerns not only 40 States negotiating a chemical weapons convention in the Conference on Disarmament, but also the world at large.