

(Mr. Friedersdorf, United States)

A verification gap necessarily presumes that there is some discernible boundary defining either side of the void. More specifically, as applied to the draft chemical weapons ban as set out in the "rolling text", any gap in verification would be bounded on the one side by routine inspection of declared facilities, as defined in article VI of CD/881, and on the other side by ... what? The quick answer would seem to be challenge inspection, as defined in article IX. And it is here that we come to the source of our difficulties: we have not yet reached agreement on the content of article IX. Indeed, the only elaboration of views on this aspect of the convention is found in a Chairman's paper in appendix II of CD/881, which is prefaced with the Caveat that "nothing contained therein constitutes any agreement and therefore does not bind any delegation". Since we have not yet defined the boundaries of any so-called "verification gap", it is understandable that we are having difficulty devising a verification scheme to fill such a gap. We must reach agreement on article IX before we can determine if there is a gap in the verification régime of the draft text, and, if so, how it should be filled. For that reason, our delegation believes it is time to get back to basics.

The position of the United States on article IX of the chemical weapons convention is well known. When President George Bush, then Vice-President, tabled the United States draft convention, he made clear that mandatory, short-notice, on-site inspection is indispensable to an effective convention. He stated:

"For a chemical weapons ban to work, each party must have confidence that the other parties are abiding by it. This elementary, common-sense principle is the essence of what we mean by verification. No sensible Government enters into those international contracts known as treaties unless it can ascertain - or verify - that it is getting what it contracted for."

As related to a chemical weapons convention, Vice-President Bush explained that each party must know:

"First, that all stocks have been destroyed;

"Second, that all declared production facilities have been destroyed;

"Third, that the declared stocks really do constitute all the stocks;

"And fourthly, that the declared facilities are all the facilities."

For the first two requirements Mr. Bush enumerated, the United States proposed continuous, on-site monitoring and periodic random inspection. We are pleased that, during the past five years, there has evolved substantial acceptance of these proposals by the members of the Conference on Disarmament, although we recognize that there remain specific aspects to be addressed.