

tions made by Ambassador Fields of the United States, and by Ambassador Cromartie of the United Kingdom, the important observations which the Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Bill Hayden, made in particular on the verification issue, as well as Ambassador Dhanapala's lucid remarks that brought certain problems in their proper perspective. Permit me also to mention the interventions of Ambassador Issraelyan, on 9 August, Ambassador Daciu of Romania, Mr. Montassier of France and the State Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Switzerland, Mr. Brunner, to whom we are grateful for inviting us to visit his country's protection facilities in Speiz.

We share the views of those who stated that obtaining a hundred per cent assurance of compliance is beyond our reach. The other day Ambassador Issraelyan made the plea that "presumption of innocence" rather than mutual distrust should be the guiding principle in our work for the convention. We wish to add, however, that "presumption of innocence" is only valid once a verification regime will ensure that the present alarming situation, which certainly did not arise out of acts of innocence, will effectively be tackled.

In our view, we should seek, so to speak, "adequate" assurance of compliance through a package of verification measures which complement and mutually strengthen each other. At the same time, we should not dissimulate that ultimately the decision whether or not to agree on any draft of a chemical weapons convention is a political one, requiring both courage and, of course, confidence. Courage, because certain risks cannot fully be covered. Confidence, because, after all, the most likely risks under a regime banning chemical weapons will have been dealt with and the remaining risks can be minimized.

Let us take a closer look at some of these risks. The first such risk is the continued existence of stockpiles, in contravention of the ban. Therefore parties to the convention should first be enabled to assure themselves that declared stocks fully coincide with existing stocks. There is a limit to the degree of certainty that can be obtained, because the possibility for a State to hide stockpiles can never totally be precluded. But provisions should be such that a State contemplating doing so — in militarily significant quantities — would be deterred by a serious risk of detection warranting a challenge inspection.

We believe that there seems to emerge a consensus that international on-site verification of the declaration of stockpiles could be made less sensitive by having it organized at relocation sites where chemical weapons will be regrouped, in lieu of in military arsenals.

However, so far, no agreement has been reached on the time span within which and the schedule according to which, all declared stocks would have to be open for verification.

Ambassador Dhanapala expressed some views on this matter, underlining the need for comprehensive information with regard to the plans for destruction and for a phasing-out scheme that would not prejudice the security of any State party. We agree with him. Indeed, we think that we should seek agreement on a phased scheme for verification of declarations of stocks, to be put on a parallel with a time-table to be agreed upon for the phased destruction of stockpiles. Such time-tables should meet certain criteria, so as to ensure: first, that the most dangerous chemical weapons will be destroyed in the early phase; and second, that each country will gradually and proportionally dispose of its stocks.

In order to meet the first criterion — most dangerous weapons first — the toxicity of each category of weapons should be a determinant, while at the same time a distinction must be made between agents placed in weapons and those stored in bulk form. With respect to the latter distinction we agree with the approach chosen by the representative of Australia, Mr. Rowe, on 19 July, when he rightly pointed out that opera-