

gation wishes that it could be of some help in disengaging ourselves from the present impasse, and would thus make a contribution to reactivating the substantive discussion on a nuclear test ban with a view to its early conclusion.

CD/PV.279

pp.9-13

Australia/Hayden

7.8.84

CTB,CW

Some people assert that the technical means of verification are available, though it is evident that the matter is not yet resolved to the satisfaction of all concerned. Others say that technical questions of verification are no more than a smokescreen that deflect attention from a lack of political will to conclude the CTB treaty. Now, it is only through detailed technical discussion of the practical matters at stake that such questions can be answered. Only then will we establish the real nature and extent of the issue and what needs to be done to resolve it. The verification of a CTB treaty was the subject of trilateral negotiations for years before 1980. It has been considered by this Conference (and its predecessor bodies) for many years. This Conference's Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts has undertaken a considerable amount of work on the issue, even though somewhat constrained by a restrictive mandate. The experiment to be conducted later this year is an important test of the ability to pool seismic information from different parts of the world, and more work of course needs to be done in this regard.

The more intractable problems of verification of a CTB by seismic means are the threshold conditions related to, first, the inherent uncertainties in the measurement technique and second systematic bias because of the geological differences in various regions of the world. These matters have not been explored in detailed technical fashion so far in this Conference.

Serious questions need examination. What assistance in resolving these problems, for example, could be derived from carefully prepared and monitored measurement shots of known yield? What means of evading a seismic monitoring system can be envisaged and what counter measures are available? Questions as to whether or not additional remote sensing techniques for verification and cross-checking purposes are needed remain to be answered. One thinks for example of the possible need for atmospheric fallout detectors to detect explosions conducted in the atmosphere and unable to be detected seismically -- to quote only the best known of a well-known range of relevant technologies. There is the whole question of "black boxes" and of on-site inspection on which agreement has seemed close at least twice in the past but in the end result, has proved elusive. These are matters which must be re-opened and pursued to successful conclusion by resolving what should be essentially the agreed application of technology.

As an indication of the issues that could be considered by a subsidiary body of the Conference on Disarmament -- if the Conference were willing to start work on a CTB in such a body -- I am tabling today a Working Paper outlining a set of principles for the verification of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty.

No amount of procedural debate, of course, will cause the technical questions involved in implementing such principles to disappear. Nor will it resolve them. The fact is that urgent practical work on such questions cannot possibly impede progress towards completion of a CTB. It is the only road towards a CTB. The Australian delegation has worked with vigour to overcome those procedural obstacles and in an effort to secure establishment of a subsidiary body of the Conference on Disarmament to undertake this urgently needed practical work "with a view to the negotiation of a treaty" as we have described it. It goes without saying that Australia would prefer a so-called "full negotiating mandate". There should be no misunderstanding about that. It also goes without saying that it is conclusively established that there is no consensus for such a mandate