

(Mr. Semichi, Algeria)

deadline of 1995, a date that will undoubtedly bring a clarification of many countries' nuclear options, and that precisely in the light of the results of the Review Conference on the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

In this respect I would like to remind the Conference that in recent years the international community has on several occasions spelt out the philosophical basis for a comprehensive test ban by describing such a ban as the first step towards a totally denuclearized world. It has never been a matter of giving legal sanction to a situation by definitively dividing the world into countries which have nuclear weapons and countries which do not. My country is anxious that this aspect of the negotiations should not be overlooked, particularly now that, after years of shilly-shallying and after having described the halting of tests as an ideal, the representatives of certain nuclear Powers seem to wish to convince us that the Non-Proliferation Treaty has created a special category of subjects of international law, what the nuclear Powers call "legitimate" nuclear Powers, as opposed to other Powers or States that they designate by the strongly negative term "proliferators".

That is not merely a rhetorical device, but, just as it would be unrealistic to think that States that have expended huge amounts of effort and money in the context of nuclear rivalry will unilaterally get rid of their arsenals, so it would be unrealistic to think that the current non-nuclear-weapon States, some of which suffered from foreign domination for centuries, will agree to the perpetual minimization of their status as subjects of international law and grant a limited group of Powers the option of nuclear blackmail. That is why, in our view, real deterrence, deterrence that is politically legitimate and acceptable from the humanitarian point of view, is deterrence that, drawing on the principle of the equality of the rights of States and peoples, is founded on the idea that no State should possess categories of weapons that are, as a matter of principle, prohibited for other States. At this stage of international relations, that may seem utopian. None the less, humanity must work to that end in order to preserve international peace and security.

Like the majority of the members of the international community, we do not subscribe to the idea that adherence to a convention that limits or prohibits in itself constitutes good international conduct. On the contrary, we are convinced that it is practical and voluntary respect in good faith of both the letter and the spirit of such a convention - even if scruples of principle may momentarily prevent formal adherence - which establishes the proper norm of international conduct. In the same way, we believe that the value of agreements to reduce or ban weapons should not be undermined by a purely formal legalism which, based on the idea that anything that is not formally prohibited is permitted, would lead to a never-ending race between technology and international security arrangements. When we see that there was an interval of nearly 50 years between the beginning of nuclear testing and the emergence of consensus to end it, or when we know that it took a century from the time of their first use for chemical weapons to be formally