

those questions alone.

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....But we have to recognize equally that such a step-by-step approach must be part of a plan where one step is followed automatically by more meaningful steps, with each time-bound phase leading within an agreed time-frame to a comprehensive test-ban Treaty. This approach can be pursued at two levels simultaneously. First, we can gradually reduce the yield range of nuclear tests and second we can provide for a reduction in the number of nuclear-tests on a yearly basis. Despite arguments that the technology to verify and locate nuclear testing has not yet reached a level of sophistication which would satisfy some States, my delegation believes that given the political will such an approach could be made adequately verifiable.

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It is obvious that, in particular with respect to the verification of the future ban, certain immensely difficult hurdles must be overcome. This prompts me to focus in my intervention on some general aspects of the role of verification in a chemical weapons ban, as well as on some of the main related problems.

Let me state at the outset that it is no surprise that questions of verification continue to present major obstacles in the search for a chemical-weapons agreement: chemical weapons have only too effectively been used throughout this century and even in the recent past we have been witness to the horror of chemical war. Chemical weapons have been and continue to be stockpiled in militarily relevant quantities, thus forming a threat to mankind. Eradicating chemical weapons would therefore amount to a major disarmament effort aiming at the removal of a redoubtable and viable weapons-system. It is only too understandable that for such an effort to be successful, confidence in the compliance with the provisions of the agreement should be assured. This can only be achieved in the form of a set of inevitably elaborate and in themselves unprecedented verification arrangements.

This alone would sufficiently explain the formidable task the present negotiators are confronted with. Unfortunately, however, there are other complicating factors inherent in the nature of chemical weapons themselves.

A great many potential chemical warfare agents and precursors thereof are produced in the civilian chemical industry and for perfectly permissible and legitimate purposes. On the one hand we recognize that measures to verify the non-production of those agents and precursors for hostile purposes in the civilian industry should not interfere with production for legitimate purposes — production which takes place, moreover, in a highly competitive context. On the other hand we must insist that measures to contain and reduce the risk of circumvention or evasion of the rules are essential, especially in an area where possible loopholes appear to be abundant.

An additional related complicating factor is the emergence of highly developed chemical industrial activities for civil purposes in an increasing number of countries. Thus there is an increasing risk of proliferation of chemical weapons to be taken into account. This underlines the importance of a truly multilateral agreement.

Do these complicating factors render our goal well-nigh out of reach? This certainly is not the case. We witness progress in the Ad Hoc Committee and in working groups. We have listened to very constructive and thoughtful interventions on the matter in these last weeks. I mention the very interesting and comprehensive clarifying contribu-