

(Mr. Reese, Australia)

difficulties we have experienced in developing article IX of the convention in regard to the process of challenge inspection, or inspections on request, is the reluctance among delegations to address the problem of decision-making by the Executive Council of the convention in regard to the inspection process.

Australia's approach to verification is predicated on the requirement for an effectively verifiable convention in which we can have confidence in States parties' compliance. This is a matter of critical national security for us. We are concerned about any approach to compliance which would give to the requested State a right simply to refuse an inspection team's access to a suspect site on the basis of the requested State's contention that the site was not relevant to the convention. We recognize the importance of protecting sensitive matters of national security, but believe that a combination of right of access, balanced by some management of that access, would enable the effective operation of the convention. Trial inspections of military facilities conducted by the United Kingdom and the Federal Republic of Germany suggest that a satisfactory balance can be struck between the requirements of the inspection process and the security concerns of the inspected State.

I would like to touch on one other area of verification, the proposal for a system of ad hoc inspections. A number of delegations have made clear that they believe the concept should be explored further as part of the overall approach to verification. It offers the possibility of a verification system additional to routine inspections and challenge inspections which would strengthen the level of deterrence of the convention without the same degree of intrusiveness as a challenge inspection.

I do not think that ad hoc inspections can be dismissed as "Disguised challenge inspections" without first having the opportunity to discuss the concept further in the Ad hoc Committee. Yet, some delegations are unwilling to agree to this further discussion. I think it inimical to our processes for delegations to prejudge an issue. It is possible, of course, that, when the whole verification package is finally developed, Governments will not see a need for ad hoc inspections, but we cannot make that judgement now.

Verification may be thought of as a microcosm of the convention, requiring a balance of interests and a willingness to keep a sense of proportion and overall practical balance. It is essentially a political act of assurance among the States parties. Thus, efforts to reduce the elements of confrontation and to increase the sense of shared mutual obligation and support should be the centre of our efforts. The current conceptual framework is adequate in its political content and feasible in its commercial impact. It deserves to be supported, completed and adopted.

In this negotiating period the various approaches to ensuring universality of the convention have caused divisions among us. Our common goal is a convention which is universal in its application, and it is no accident that the issues we find most difficult to resolve are all directly related to this common goal. It is evident that there is no single path to