

convinced that the proposals of the USSR provide a real basis for a mutually acceptable agreement on the totality of issues related to a chemical weapons ban, including, naturally, those of verification.

However, as in the case of many other arms limitation and disarmament negotiations, certain delegations made verification of compliance with the future convention a major obstacle to the conclusion of an agreement on this issue. The Soviet delegation therefore feels obliged to present once more our views on the issue of verification.

The main purpose of verification is to promote the implementation of arms limitation and disarmament agreements. Our assumption in this context is that the very conclusion of an international agreement is itself an expression of mutual trust between the parties to the agreement. As to the verification provisions, they should increase that confidence through the presentation of relevant information on the practical and effective compliance with the convention and by carrying out other adequate forms of verification. For all their importance, the verification measures have only a secondary role, while the central role belongs to the agreement itself which provides for arms limitation and reduction and should be subject to verification. If isolated from actual arms limitation measures, verification loses its meaning and becomes pointless. It should enhance the security of the parties, rather than undermine it.

The existing arms limitation treaties and agreements bear no evidence to the undisputable priority of national technical means of verification — I repeat, the undisputable priority of national technical means of verification — which are best suited to serve the security interests of States. At the same time the Soviet Union believes that, where necessary, additional measures may be adopted (depending on the nature of possible arms limitations) to increase the effectiveness of verification. However, in no case should those measures be used to interfere in the internal affairs of States or to damage the security of any of the parties. The Soviet Union is interested in effective and reliable verification as much as any other nation, including the United States. Naturally, this also applies to the prohibition of chemical weapons, in view of the current large-scale United States programmes for chemical rearmament.

As is known, the Soviet Union has proposed using diverse forms of verification to provide assurance of compliance with a chemical weapons convention. Those would be in the first place national verification measures, which are especially useful in view of the extremely broad scale of chemical production in virtually all countries of the world. In addition, there are national technical means which are now already fairly varied and will doubtless improve in the future. In this connection we assume that the parties having such national technical means in their possession can make available to other parties, as necessary, the information obtained by those means which is important for the purposes of the convention. We also have in mind systematic international on-site inspections in connection with certain provisions of the future convention; and finally, on-site verification on request, the role of which is hard to overestimate in view of its very broad nature.

Our approach to verification is confronted with another approach, one that can hardly be called anything but extremist. Its most striking element is the so-called "open invitation" concept formulated in the United States draft chemical weapons convention. This concept has already been mentioned repeatedly in the statements of many delegations. We too would like to set forth our views regarding that concept.

In the first place it is unrealistic. It has to be taken into account that every State in the world has certain areas of activity, agencies, institutions and facilities, an open access to which would require a change in their existing legislation. It would be sufficient to cite the national gold reserve and security depositories, institutes that use sensitive devices and equipment kept in special premises and made accessible only at strictly defined time intervals, or archives, not to mention military facilities and