

We did this in the belief not that this could in any way substitute for a binding international convention but that such a step would assist in the development of a consensus upon which could be based further negotiations, and would thus contribute to the cause of arms control and disarmament.

The discussions during this period appeared to indicate some measure of agreement that the problem of verification required particular attention. Most delegations in the Committee on Disarmament appear also to accept the thesis that verification by challenge is the only feasible verification procedure that can logically be considered for biological agents. Clearly, however, chemical weapons pose problems of a different dimension. Moreover, inasmuch as measures additional to verification by challenge may be deemed necessary for chemical weapons, it becomes evident that there would be a requirement for both national and international procedures. It has not yet proven possible, however, to determine precisely what form these measures might take. A further definition of these procedures remains one of the highest-priority items for consideration in the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament.

Biological Weapons

In addition to various background documents, such as the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Chemical and Bacteriological (Biological) Weapons and the Effects of their Possible Use" and the report of the World Health Organization entitled "The Health Effects of Possible Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons", the Committee on Disarmament has before it a draft convention, and this Committee has before it a draft convention, on biological weapons submitted by the British delegation in Document CCD 255/Rev.2. This Committee also has before it the revised draft convention on chemical and biological weapons submitted by nine socialist states to this session of the United Nations General Assembly in Document A/8136, to which reference was made this morning.

During our debate in Geneva this last year, differing opinions were again expressed on whether the problems of the prohibition of research, development, production and stockpiling of chemical and biological weapons should be considered simultaneously or separately, and whether any eventual treaty should attempt to cover both types of weapon. Our view continues to be that high priority should be given to efforts to prohibit both, but that difficulties in making progress on one should not rule out progress on the other.

In the limited time available to us in this Committee this year, our delegation doubts whether, even after a general discussion which we hope will take place on the various issues involved in the negotiations to ban chemical and bacteriological weapons, it would be possible for the General Assembly to take substantive decisions, particularly having regard to the basic differences of opinion that we found have prevented more substantial progress in the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament.