

(Mr. Waldegrave, United Kingdom)

... And it is not one-way traffic. The spread or use of weapons of mass destruction outside Europe's borders could lead to crises with world-wide implications. They could produce devastation in the regions directly concerned, and affect the security of other regions. The NATO declaration acknowledges this. It commits the allies to work to contain the security threats and destabilizing consequences of an uncontrolled spread of modern military technologies. The declaration makes plain that one of NATO's long-term priorities is to work for a world where military forces exist solely to preserve national independence and territorial integrity.

The issue of chemical weapons is immediately relevant here. A convention to ban chemical weapons is the active item on the agenda of this Conference. This is right, for in Europe the imbalance in chemical weapons between East and West is a potentially destabilizing factor of great significance. Outside Europe the number of countries with chemical weapons capabilities is growing. The problem is not just one of proliferation, serious though that is. Chemical weapons are also being used. We have all seen the horrifying consequences of their use relayed on our television screens. It is an awful reminder of our common vulnerability, and the pressing need for a global solution.

The Paris Conference, which I attended in January this year, made clear the widespread revulsion of the international community against the use of chemical weapons. It recognized that a comprehensive and global ban on such weapons offered the only effective solution. The clear message from Paris to Geneva was to urge you - to urge us - to redouble efforts here to achieve a ban. You have put a great deal of work into this. The general concept of the convention is in place. Progress has been made on the detail, although there is still much hard, technical work left. The need now is for a clear, practical, problem-solving approach to removing the remaining obstacles.

Verification remains the top priority. For a convention to work it needs verification which works. The existing verification provisions go a long way towards achieving this. But areas of particular concern remain. We must be satisfied that all high-risk facilities and activities are adequately covered, whether they are dual-purpose production plants or military installations. Further efforts are needed. The British approach is on two levels: practical verification proposals and efforts to shape the climate of international opinion.

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