

a Group of Experts study on the role of the United Nations in verification. The study would identify and review existing activities of the United Nations in the field of arms control and disarmament; assess the need for improvements in existing activities; explore and identify other possible activities; and provide specific recommendations for future actions by the United Nations in this regard. The Group's report would be submitted to the Forty-fifth Session of the General Assembly in 1990.⁷ The Resolution passed by a vote of 150-1-0, with the United States opposing the motion.

That same month, a Department of External Affairs briefing note addressed the Canadian Government's position regarding the notion of an international verification organization (IVO) and the link between such a body and the UN. It stated:

Canada advocates a realistic and step-by-step approach to the establishment of IVOs, including those that would employ the UN. Costly schemes to create verification bodies with all-encompassing responsibilities, some of which go beyond the limited function of verifying compliance with arms control and disarmament agreements, are inappropriate. Verification should be primarily a treaty-specific activity. While useful work may be done to study verification as a general process and to discuss general principles, the implementation of verification is fundamentally dependent on the specifics of a treaty context. For the foreseeable future, the most effective way of organizing the specialized expertise necessary for verification will be through treaty-specific organizations. Under current international conditions an IVO with responsibilities for several ACD agreements is unlikely to [be] a realistic possibility.⁸

The opening session of the Group of Experts study on the role of the United Nations in verification was held from 13 to 17 February 1989. Composed of authorities from over twenty countries, including Canada, the Group dedicated its first session primarily to organizational matters and the preparation of a draft outline of the Group's report. Fred Bild, Canada's Assistant Deputy Minister of External Affairs for Political and International Security Affairs, was elected chairman. Three more sessions were scheduled, with the fourth to end with the completion of the report.⁹

Speaking to the CD on 20 June 1989, Mr. Bild discussed the importance of verification in Canadian arms control policy:

...verification and transparency are two subjects that have formed a central part of the Canadian Government's approach to multilateral arms control and disarmament. They are central elements in building confidence and consensus. It will come as no surprise... that verification ranks high in our priorities. Canada has endeavoured through its verification research programme to contribute in an effective way to the very foundation of arms control. Some of the studies we have initiated have looked at technical problems associated with various methods of verification, while others have sought to clarify the

⁷ UNGA Resolution 43/81B, 7 December 1988.

⁸ "Establishment of a UN Verification Organization," Department of External Affairs, *Briefing Note*, 22 December 1988, p. 3.

⁹ "Work Begins on S. G. Studies," *Disarmament Times* (April 1989), p. 1.