

ANNEX

Verification and the United Nations

Paper Submitted by the Netherlands and Canada on 31 May 1988

1. Introduction

There now exists an international consensus that provisions for adequate and appropriate verification form an essential component for arms control and disarmament agreements to be effective. In addition, there is a recognition that verification serves functions that are critical to the long-term success of the entire arms control and disarmament process.

The importance of verification rests on the fact that an arms control agreement is essentially a compromise between nations in which each party to the agreement bases part or all of its national security on the undertakings of other contracting parties rather than relying exclusively on its own capabilities.

Since the benefit from an arms control agreement for each participating state derives from the compliance of the other participants in the agreement, there is a natural desire for some form of impartial assurance that all participants are fulfilling their obligations. Consequently, reciprocal confidence that all parties are abiding by their obligations, is indispensable to the successful negotiation, conclusion and implementation of arms control and disarmament agreements. Expressed simply, verification is the process by which such confidence is created and maintained.

There is also growing awareness of the important role that multilateral agreements (in addition to bilateral agreements) will play in the arms control and disarmament process and, consequently, the significance that multilateral verification is likely to have in the future. However, the exact forms of this multilateral verification cannot be clear in advance of the actual negotiation of specific agreements.