

military effort which could not go undetected. While minor non-compliance might not jeopardize the other side's military situation, any would-be violator would hesitate, weighing carefully the political consequences of any such action.

A co-operative and reciprocal inspection regime would help to clarify a situation before it could lead to a serious misunderstanding, or miscalculation, or worse. And, recognizing that the real world in which this system will operate is full of ambiguities and uncertainties, here as elsewhere flexibility will be required.

But the essential principle remains: an agreement lacking effective verification is not better than no agreement at all. An agreement that is permissive towards violations, or could give rise to allegations of non-compliance because it lacked effective verification provisions, could be a greater danger than no agreement at all. It could lead to tensions arising from dubious compliance when national security is seen to be at risk.

Efforts to control or reduce armaments in Europe must sooner or later involve the full range of political interests of all the participating states. Verification is essentially a co-operative and reciprocal process. Thus, all states assuming obligations under any agreement adopted here should be assured that they can effectively verify compliance with it.

This conference could take a major step forward in the verification process. Here is a forum where a common political commitment combined with technological expertise and multilateral diplomacy could produce a verification arrangement that will ensure that the agreed measures really do build confidence and security.

Verification is not an end in itself. But it will be of vital importance as a component of the final result here, because it enhances the confidence of the parties and creates a sense of predictability. And that comes close to the heart of our purpose. Detailed drafting on this issue is long overdue. Visible progress could offer new encouragement that an agreement is possible here: not just a minimal agreement, but a break-through agreement as befits the pioneering nature of this work. Because without provisions for effective verification there will be no agreement. Progress could