



Statements and Speeches

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THE SIGNIFICANCE OF VERIFICATION IN THE ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT PROCESS

Speech by Mr. D.S. McPhail, Permanent Representative and Ambassador to the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament, Geneva, June 11, 1981

At the beginning of the 1981 session, I indicated my intention to speak on the subject of verification and its significance to the arms-control process, particularly as it relates to this Committee [on Disarmament].

It is appropriate to do so today because it is almost one year since the compendium of arms-control verification proposals (CD/99) was tabled. The compendium was followed by a second paper (CD/127) which served to quantify some of the research upon which the compendium was based. Today, I have the honour to submit to this Committee the third and final working paper which deals with the subject in a generic fashion. It is entitled *A conceptual working paper on arms-control verification*.

More importantly, however, it is appropriate to consider verification as this Committee resumes its work because if priorities are oriented properly, 1981 could prove to be one of the most productive sessions in many years. Leading up to the United Nations General Assembly's second special session on disarmament, this Committee's negotiations could prove influential by achieving progress in areas where the verification aspects of the problem have taken on a particular significance. There are two areas where positive action could be taken.

Chemical weapons

In the Working Group on Chemical Weapons, there is an opportunity to explore verification at the top end of the spectrum. By that I mean that chemical weapons, which exist in great numbers and therefore constitute a real and present threat, must of consequence be subject to a high level of verification in such areas as non-production, facility dismantling and weapons destruction. The Canadian working paper on verification and control requirements tabled on March 26, 1981 (CD/167) provides an overview of the problem. While we are aware that there have been fears expressed concerning intrusiveness and the possibility of compromising civilian industrial secrets, our appreciation is that such inspections are possible without detriment to legitimate commercial sensitivities. This is the conclusion pointed to by the 1979 workshop conducted by the Federal Republic of Germany (in terms of non-production) and of the subsequent British workshop (from the standpoint of dismantling and destruction of facilities). Results were presented in documents CD/37 and CD/15 respectively. Working papers documenting the Canadian experience in destruction of existing agents support this line of reasoning as well.

This Committee has not really come to grips with the verification issue *vis-à-vis* chemical weapons. I suggest, therefore, that during the second period of concentration of the chemical weapons working group, this aspect be explored. Such work

would constitute a positive and realistic contribution in support of the bilateral negotiations.

**Comprehensive
test ban**

While this Committee has not been involved in direct negotiations concerning a possible comprehensive test ban (CTB), many members, myself included, have registered our interest and concern. Progress towards a CTB agreement has been considered by all to be painfully slow, but we have recognized at the same time the complexity of the technical issues involved, particularly those relating to verification. The Norwegian representative underscored this fact for all of us, I think, when he pointed out on March 10, 1981 (CD/PV.113) that "an adequate verification system is a necessary component in a total test-ban régime, both in order to ensure compliance and to build confidence". In highlighting his own country's contribution through "NORSAR" in the area of seismic verification, he acknowledged the important progress achieved by the *Ad Hoc* Group of Scientific Experts to Consider International Co-operative Measures to Detect and Identify Seismic Events.

Canada considers the work accomplished by the *Ad Hoc* Group to be of singular significance in practical terms towards the realization of a comprehensive test ban. A ban is one of the four elements in the "Strategy of Suffocation" which Prime Minister Trudeau outlined at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, in 1978. Beyond that, however, it is an area of interest to Canada precisely because it is one in which advanced technology, unfettered by other considerations, could provide adequate verification with practical and almost immediate results. I need hardly point out that as far back as in 1962, it was the Soviet Union which declared that, in the interests of seismic verification, it was "prepared to agree to two to three inspections a year being carried out in the territory of each of the nuclear powers" and that the proposal it had put forward for "automatic seismic stations" included "elements of international control" (ENDC/73).

Eighteen years later the negotiating states, in their tripartite report to this Committee (CD/130), acknowledged the contribution which co-operative seismic monitoring measures could make in verifying compliance with a treaty. The report accepted conditional "on-site" inspection as a co-operative measure. We strongly believe that this Committee and the seismic experts group could supplement in a very practical manner the efforts of the negotiating states.

A pivotal role

These two areas of negotiations — CTB and CW — are representative of those in which verification plays a pivotal role. Very often it appeared that difficulties in verification issues were based on preconceived differences regarding purpose, methodology and definition. It was in part the frustration of being so close to and yet so far from a number of agreements which prompted the initiation of the basic research program of which this conceptual paper is a result.

We accept the argument put forth very often that specific terms of verification cannot be negotiated before the arms-control problem itself is defined. It has been our view, however, that there are similarities in the concept of verification which extend across the spectrum of the arms-control problem. Hence we can and should learn from our experience. It is in this spirit that we developed the "compendium", to see what had

actually been proposed and why, with the objective of developing a common perspective and verification typology. There has been a virtual revolution in terms of verification technology. Yet, argumentation has remained largely unchanged. On the one hand, information which might have been kept from hand-held cameras in 1960 is now made available, often by mutual agreement through national technical means today. On the other hand, while intrusion has indeed changed, in any practical sense we tend here to be rather historical, and updating is needed.

Prior to the Second World War — the 1922 naval accords and the 1925 Geneva Protocol were examples — arms control and disarmament agreements negotiated under comparatively normal peace-time conditions did not normally make provision for systematic and effective verification of compliance with obligations. In post-Second World War negotiations, however, provision has generally been made for some type of verification. In fact, verification in some form is now normally a part of almost any significant agreement, whether public or private. As members of this Committee, we must recognize therefore, that to insist upon verification in an arms-control agreement is not necessarily to question the good faith of any one of the negotiators entering into an agreement, but rather through the reciprocal nature of the provision, to build confidence and ultimately strengthen mutual trust.

I believe that it will be apparent to you upon reading the conceptual paper that the rationale which has been developed is without bias — that has certainly been our intention. The definition of verification, for example, was selected not from any political document, but rather from the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*. It is a particularly apt definition in that it included "demonstration" as an equal, and in my view preferable, method of verification to "inspection".

Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko warned last autumn that the arms race "is approaching a point beyond which it may become impossible to curb it effectively by means of agreements based on mutual verification". If mutual verification encompasses the principle of reciprocity in its broadest sense, then of course all of us can support his reasoning and his concern. That being said, members of the Committee have the right to believe that it should apply not only to verification means now in use internationally (such as national technical means), but also to all methods of verification, existing and potential. It means that preconceptions of "mutual verification" of the last 20 years must be reassessed, in the light of the necessities today. Should not the requirement for secrecy within national borders and the claim of intrusiveness as an argument against adequate verification be reviewed? Indeed it could be argued that national technical means, a verification method accepted by treaty in the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) process, is the most intrusive method in terms of national security assets. I commend to you the discussion on intrusion contained in Canada's conceptual paper being tabled today.

In submitting this latest working paper on verification, Canada continues on a course set 20 years ago, in the then multilateral negotiating body here in Geneva. Canada then took a special interest in the verification provisions of the Sea-Bed Treaty; and today, we apply the same concept of verification to other subjects, recognizing the special requirements of each area.

We hope that this conceptual working paper will lead to greater consideration of verification in this body. We are not looking to the Committee to conduct a study of verification, which would be inappropriate for the Committee. We are looking to others to contribute to greater consideration of this subject: we hope others will choose to table papers on aspects of verification in which they may have special expertise and which can contribute to common understanding.

Finally, in the spirit of the commencement of the Second Disarmament Decade, and in the approach to the United Nations General Assembly's second special session on disarmament, I hope this committee will allocate to itself a period within which to discuss briefly the unique and vital significance of verification to arms-control agreements. This would serve to highlight the importance which has been accorded to this subject by the Committee in including it in Item IX of its permanent agenda. In this connection I am pleased to offer, on behalf of my government, to provide a briefing on the conceptual paper and on the research behind it by experts from Ottawa who are ready to share their experiences with you.

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