Disarmament and verification

Austria: working paper

I

The successful implementation of arms limitation or disarmament measures depends on the degree of confidence each party has that all other parties are complying with the agreement.

In this context verification plays an important role. In most of the agreements so far concluded or currently under consideration, verification is an essential element. The inability to reach agreement on specific texts may, to a large extent, be attributed to a divergence in views on this subject.

The form and modalities of the verification to be provided for in any specific agreement are closely connected with the purpose of that agreement and should be determined by the objectives it is designed to meet.

It is, therefore, essential to have clarity, in the discussion on verification in respect of any given disarmament agreement, on the precise purposes of that verification. This clarity does not always exist and has in the past led to problems of definition. Likewise, in the various papers that have been presented to the Preparatory Committee, mention is made of "control", "verification", "inspection" and "monitoring", accompanied by adjectives such as "strict", "effective", "international", "adequate" and so on.

In view, further, of the use of verification to instill a sufficient degree of confidence conducive to adherence to agreements, it is not surprising that in virtually all these papers verification is described as an "indispensable", "essential", "necessary" part of disarmament.

It is precisely because of the far-reaching significance of this problem that Austria feels it should be examined more closely in the course of the preparations for the special session.
A first step in arriving at some agreed understanding on an approach to verification might be the presentation of a background paper prepared by the Secretariat which could help to pinpoint different problem areas and possible ways of approaching them. Austria therefore proposes that the Preparatory Committee entrust the Secretariat with the preparation of such a background paper.

This background paper could, inter alia, contain the following elements:

- proposals for commonly agreed definitions;
- a listing of different functions of verification measures and a discussion of the corresponding requirements for verification measures;
- the concept of adequacy of verification;
- verification as a confidence-building measure;
- a survey of various means, methods and types of verification followed by an indication of their potential usefulness in correspondence to different disarmament agreements;
- the impact of modern technology on verification.

In a second stage, the Committee might wish to propose an in-depth study of these questions. Thus, in addition to the paragraphs on control and verification in the part on principles guiding disarmament negotiations - which in the view of the Austrian Government should be more detailed than those which have been included in the existing proposals - we could include in the draft programme of action a proposal for such a study. In this connexion the expertise of the IAEA on some aspects of the question could also be utilized.
II

In trying to illustrate the areas where, on the basis of such a study, principles concerning verification could be formulated, one could mention the following:

- the necessity of at least some verification measures in all internationally agreed disarmament measures;

- a listing of possible measures of verification which might be applied, alone or in combination, to different disarmament agreements;

- a clearer definition of the concept of adequacy of verification, i.e., which degree of assurance about the compliance with an agreement can be regarded as reasonable;

- the striking of a balance between the scope of a disarmament measure (partial or comprehensive) and the cost of verification (in monetary and/or political terms);

- the requirement for every Government making a disarmament proposal to also propose corresponding verification measures;

- the possibility, in principle, for all countries to participate directly or through the United Nations in the verification of disarmament agreements including the right to access to all relevant information;

- the body or authority responsible for the verification and the role of the United Nations.

III

(a) Austria would propose the following paragraphs to be included in the draft declaration (p. 44 of document A/AC.187/93/Rev.1):

"The successful implementation of arms limitation or disarmament measures depends on the degree of confidence each party has that all other parties are complying with the agreement.

In this context verification plays an important role. The form and modalities of the verification to be provided for in any specific agreement are closely connected with the purposes of that agreement and should be determined by the objectives it is designed to meet.

For each disarmament or arms limitation proposal measure of verification, alone or in combination, should be devised in accordance with the requirement of a sufficient degree of confidence between the parties. Every Government making a disarmament proposal should therefore include in such a proposal indications about corresponding verification measures.

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Just as all States should have the possibility of participation in disarmament negotiations, they should, in principle, also have the possibility to take part, directly or through the United Nations, in the verification of disarmament agreements, including the right to access to all relevant information."

(b) For the elaboration of the draft programme of action, Austria would propose the following paragraph to be included in the appropriate section concerning studies to be carried out in order to facilitate future disarmament negotiations:

"The Secretary-General is requested to carry out a study on all aspects of verification and control of arms limitation and disarmament measures on the basis of terms of reference to be specified by /an appropriate disarmament organ/" (depending on the relevant decision(s) of the special session concerning machinery for disarmament negotiations).