A job well begun is nearly half done. This is perfectly true in respect to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). The negotiations of the CWC has been a monumental task, a labour which consumed twenty-four years and produced an agreement on complete ban on chemical weapons. After the protracted negotiations through bilateral and multilateral efforts, the Conference on Disarmament (CD) had sent the Convention to the United Nations General Assembly for its acceptance.

The German composer and pianist Ludwig van Beethoven is reported to have said that one never completes a symphony, one simply gives up. This may be useful point to consider while thinking about the CWC which in the beginning of 1993, seems to have been all but completed. A great deal of time and energy must still be invested to ensure that the CWC achieve its purpose. The positive characterization of the CWC talks suggests that there is a mutual assurance of a purposeful negotiation and thoughtful approach. This was reflective in the CWC First Review Conference in April 2003. Another task should be to ensure a broad understanding on how to negotiate. This means that defining the modalities and identifying the principles. In any negotiation, the modalities are about ground rules; the principles are about key ideas that help frame the solution. Two principles present themselves in this case. This first is that any settlement of the CWC implementation issues must be political in character. The other principle, even more important, is that the settlement must be based on "give and take" or a kind of trade-offs. The pertinent question is -- must individual countries such as major powers be prepared to look ahead and make major concessions? In any sensitive diplomatic exercise of the CWC implementation levels, a major part of negotiation should be at home. What is needed is the sign of coherent thinking and critical assimilation within the government and less reassuring should not be the reluctance to take the opposition into confidence.

The CWC's implementing agency the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) is not an amorphous organization. It is a well-structured, well-conceived, well-defined and well thoughtout organization with purposes and objectives. The OPCW aims to achieve four principal objectives: the elimination of chemical weapons and the capacity to develop them, the verification of non-proliferation, international assistance and protection in the event of the use or threat of use of
chemical weapons, and international cooperation in the peaceful use of chemistry. The CWC, because of its broad scope and the compliance verification system integral to its functioning, poses important questions which must be addressed, whether by private citizens, defense strategists, academicians, legal scholars, legislators and parliaments asked to embrace the agreement. Among these: Is it possible to achieve universal adherence? Does it really matter? Can compliance be effectively verified? How will the CWC be administered? Who will pay for it and how much will it cost? Do we, as a country, give away more than we get back? Pertaining to the understandings, the implications and managing the repercussions of chemical arms control, this thesis may explain, or perhaps prove to be both a stimulus to critical awareness on the CWC and useful analytical tool. Understanding and the appreciation of, though not necessary agreement with, the arguments presented in the thesis is critical to the debate over what form, and ultimately what success, the CWC should have been enjoying. Although a final CWC has been a long and difficult process, not just as an achievement, but the compromises, controversies, accomplishment in terms of ratification and to a some extent implementation of the CWC will surely generate equally spirited debate all over the world in the coming decades.