

(Mr. Lowitz, United States)

Some States have justified silence by citing their high standards of proof. Indeed, we would agree that the evidence is complex and that the world rarely yields incontrovertible proof. But does this mean that States should do nothing at all? Would they have those responsible for law enforcement in their own countries refuse even to investigate a case until the courts could guarantee a conviction? Such an approach would yield neither justice nor confidence within a country, and it cannot be expected to provide a stable system of international agreements.

States must realize that there is a direct relationship between the manner in which compliance concerns have been dealt with in the past and the kinds of verification measures in new arms control initiatives. The verification proposals in the United States draft convention are, in part, a direct result of our experience with the international response to our concerns about non-compliance. This experience forms a key part of the background to understanding our proposals.

Time is working against us in another way -- through the development of science and technology.

Unfortunately, chemical weapons are not difficult to make in comparison with nuclear weapons. As more countries develop their chemical industries the potential for manufacturing chemical weapons will inevitably expand as well.

Moreover, the chemical warfare agents known today are relatively primitive. They were discovered largely by trial and error. But our knowledge of biochemistry is rapidly growing, and such information about the chemical processes in the human body provides in turn the ability to manipulate those processes. Thus, the invention of new and even more deadly types of chemical warfare agents become technically feasible.

As another example, there are chemicals which are present naturally in the body in small quantities, but which in larger amounts could be injurious. Advances in biotechnology make it possible to produce large quantities of such chemicals.

Finally, we are concerned about development of chemicals which could make existing protective equipment useless.

All of these disquieting developments have prompted my Government to try to accelerate the negotiations. Since 1983, we have taken a number of initiatives, including the introduction of a complete draft convention. On behalf of President Reagan, Vice-President George Bush has twice visited the Conference to stress the urgency of negotiating an effective ban of chemical weapons. We have explained our positions in detail and expressed our readiness to negotiate. And what has been the result? So far, not much. There is no sense of urgency. There is no spirit of problem-solving.

As I have argued today, the effective prohibition of chemical weapons is an urgent matter which should concern us all. Such weapons are not limited to the super-Powers or a handful of industrialized countries. In fact, the majority of chemical-weapon States are developing countries in the Middle East and Asia. It is in the developing world where chemical weapons have been used in recent