

2. Chemical and Biological Weapons

by Iraq. However, in the aftermath of the war it was reported that Iraq used chemical weapons against segments of Iraqi population which were rising against the government.³

During 1990-1991, work on the chemical weapons convention at the CD continued. Two main obstacles to a complete agreement faced negotiators at the CD when they began their autumn 1990 session: the longstanding question of the degree of intrusiveness of inspection provisions and the desirability of maintaining a "security stockpile."

The draft treaty presented to the CD by the US in 1984 had called for "anytime-anywhere" inspection. Since then, the US and other countries have moved away from that position because of its high level of intrusiveness. It is thought that inspections on that scale might expose highly sensitive non-chemical weapon-related technology or facilities. The UK has proposed a form of "managed access" inspection which would allow inspections to go ahead but also allow the state being inspected to protect sensitive information. However, the US has been reluctant to agree to even this degree of inspection. In March 1991, the US shifted its position somewhat, bringing it more in line with the British idea, but still some distance from final agreement.

With respect to the second issue, the US had maintained that it would need to maintain a small quantity of chemical weapons (the two percent remaining after its agreed reductions, as set out in the agreement with the Soviet Union) as a security stockpile, pending a decision at that time about whether all chemical weapons-capable states had signed the convention. The US was alone in this position, unsupported by other states, and only weakly supported by the Soviet Union by virtue of their bilateral agreement.

However, on 13 May 1991, President Bush announced a major shift in the US position. According to Bush, the US was now ready to forswear the use of chemical weapons for any reason, including in retaliation to the use of chemical weapons, once the convention enters into force. Bush also proposed that a provision stating that chemical weapons should not be used for any purpose, be included in the convention. Furthermore, the US would completely eliminate its chemical weapons within ten years after the convention enters into force, thus removing one of the most important obstacles to further progress.

The CD began a new session on 15 May 1991, and on 16 May, the US Ambassador reiterated Bush's announcement and called for the CD to go into continuous session with a goal of completing a treaty by 1992. With the removal of the security stockpile issue, the major questions still facing the

³Lardner, George Jr. and Al Kamen. "US Urged to Investigate Reports of Iraqi Gas Use," *Washington Post*, 5 April 1991: A14.