

Mr. ISSRAELYAN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (translated from Russian): The Soviet delegation has asked for the floor today in order to exercise its right of reply. We had not intended to speak on the subject of the prohibition of chemical weapons — we propose to make a separate statement on it shortly — but we should like to comment on the statement made by our colleague, Ambassador Lowitz of the United States. This is not the first time I have heard an American statesman speak on the question of the prohibition of chemical weapons. It has become a sort of fashion for United States representatives to refer in their statements to various alleged cases of utilization of chemical weapons. Vice-President Bush did so in 1983, Mr. Adelman, the Director of the United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency did so in 1985, our colleague Ambassador Lowitz is doing so today. But in each of these cases the speaker has for some reason "forgotten" to mention that it is the United States of America which, in the whole post-war period, was the country that used toxic chemicals most widely and massively for an entire decade at the time of the war in Viet Nam. That was a gross violation of the 1925 Geneva Protocol. We shall systematically recall this when such "omissions" are made in statements by United States representatives.

As my colleagues know, I am not given to quoting myself. But on this occasion I should like to recall that speaking on another topic in this room two days ago I said that ignorance of facts, ignorance of a question's history, is not to the speaker's credit, and if he knows the facts and distorts them, then that is all the worse for him. Today I have been surprised by some of my United States colleague's assertions. For example, I quote: "What is the Soviet response to the United States draft convention presented a year ago? It is whispered in the corridors that the Soviet delegation intends to ignore the United States draft". Well, first of all, my advice to the United States delegation is not to listen to rumours; they are not the best source of information; it would do better to read the Conference records. If the United States delegation and its experts had done so, they would probably have been able to recollect that last year we spoke three times — three times — about the United States draft convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons. To substantiate my remarks and help the United States experts to avoid referring to rumours and glance at the documents instead, let me give the dates: 26 April, 24 July and 9 August 1984. Does the United States delegation perhaps think that statements about their draft convention should be made every week or at every meeting? That is something we shall not do. We shall not do it simply because we do not think that this particular draft deserves such attention. Three times is quite enough.

Ambassador Lowitz said: "The Soviet delegation has responded to the United States proposal for 'open invitation' challenge inspection. But not constructively." A question arises in my mind: the United States delegation seems to think that the only possible reaction to a United States proposal is enthusiastic approval, a storm of