

the closure and elimination of production facilities, while useful work has also been done on the guidelines for an international inspectorate. On 11 August 1987 the USSR tabled a proposal on compulsory on-site inspection which came close to that put forth by the United States in 1984. The Soviet proposal accepted the concept of challenge inspection of all chemical weapon facilities with no right of refusal. It also provided for the entry of inspection teams within forty-eight hours of a challenge (previously the Soviets had insisted on the right to veto requests for challenge inspection, and did not require that inspections be so timely).

Additional headway toward a Chemical weapons ban was made in October 1987, when representatives of forty-five nations visited a Soviet chemical weapons facility at Shikhany, on the Volga River south of Moscow. The foreign delegations were shown nineteen different types of chemical munitions and a mobile complex used for their destruction. Bilateral talks between the superpowers also resulted in visits by US officials to a Soviet facility for the destruction of chemical weapons at Chapayesk, and by Soviet officials to a US chemical weapon facility at Tooele, Utah, in November 1987. Moreover, in December 1987 the Soviet Union declared that its chemical weapons stockpile consisted of no more than 50,000 tons of poisonous agent, all located on Soviet territory.

From 7 to 11 January 1989, over 140 nations participated in a Conference on Chemical Weapons in Paris. The conference was intended to focus attention on the horrors associated with chemical weapons' use, the dangers posed by their existence and proliferation, and the outstanding issues to be addressed in achieving a chemical weapons ban. During the five days of deliberations, the total number of states to have declared non-possession of chemical weapons increased to over sixty, eleven states added their signatures to the Geneva Protocol (increasing the number of signatories from 129 to 140), and three additional states announced their intention to sign in the near future.

The Final Declaration of the Conference stressed four points: 1) the commitment of the participants not to use chemical weapons and to condemn their use (thus reaffirming the validity of the Geneva Protocol); 2) the necessity and urgency of concluding a chemical weapons ban, and for all states to accede to it upon its conclusion; 3) the need for states to exercise self-restraint and act responsibly until such time as a comprehensive ban entered into force; and 4) full support for the UN as a forum for exercising vigilance with regard to the prohibition on chemical weapons use and, in particular, for the role of the Secretary-General in investigating alleged violations of the Geneva Protocol.

Some participants at the Conference charged the Western nations with practicing a double standard by trying to halt the proliferation of chemical weapons in the Third World while at the same time developing new generations of such weapons themselves. Arab states such as Egypt, Iraq and Libya demanded that the conferees recognize their right to possess chemical weapons as long as Israel possessed a presumed nuclear capability. Both superpowers rejected such arguments.

On 8 January 1989, Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze announced at the Paris Conference that the Soviet Union would soon complete work on the Chapayesk facility for the destruction of chemical weapons, and that elimination of Soviet stockpiles of chemical weapons would begin immediately thereafter. He added that representatives of interested countries would be invited to visit the facility once it went into operation. US officials welcomed the Soviet move, but added that Moscow was "simply playing catch up"