

(Mr. Vejvoda, Czechoslovakia)

In this connection, the announcement by the United States in 1969 that it would stop manufacturing lethal CW agents is of some interest. Many nice words have been said about that decision and we are not going to question its value. But one aspect is usually omitted -- the United States could afford to halt the production of the chemical agents known at that time because it had begun to develop binary weapons under a programme for the military use of new types of CW agents.

By 1969, extensive research on binary weapons had already been accomplished. It started in 1954, when the United States Army Chemical Corps embarked on a binary weapons programme, followed by the United States Navy six years later. Widely-financed research in the following years made it possible that in 1965 binary nerve gas bombs of the Big Eye type were patented by United States Navy and Air Force, as well as binary cluster bombs in 1968. In 1969 the XM 687 binary howitzer shell prototype was field tested at Dugway proving ground. The ensuing extensive work brought us to June 1980, when the United States House of Representatives appropriated the funds needed to set up a new production facility for binary chemical weapons at Pine Bluff Arsenal, Arkansas. There followed the necessary political decisions from both the legislative and executive branches of the United States Government, and the stage was set for the actual production of this new generation of CW.

If binary and multi-component weapons production is launched, the verification of the desired CW ban will be substantially complicated. The problem is that components required for binary weapons can be made in the civilian chemical industry with no need to conceal huge stockpiles. They may also be used for peaceful purposes, e.g. to manufacture insecticides, pharmaceuticals or other chemicals. Furthermore, the binary technology makes it possible to contemplate the use of substances earlier thought to be unsuitable for military application because of their shortlived chemical stability. These are by no means all the potential dangers this new technology might bring about. If we fail to prevent binary-weapons production, we would set ourselves on a path full of unknown and often unpredictable dangers.

In our opinion, no country would start binary-weapons production out of purely security considerations. Rather, various aggressive designs will be kept in mind as well as the eternal quest for profits. And the mass production of binary and multi-component chemical weapons would ensure the arms contractors involved enormous extra profits. About \$US 10 billion is to be spent on the binary-weapons programme of the United States in the years up to 1990. Moreover, the eventual introduction of binary weapons into various regions of the world would substantially increase the chemical threat to many countries, which can only contribute to further proliferation of chemical weapons. We maintain that neither staunch aggressiveness of outdated military strategists nor financial interests of the military -- industrial complex represent a valid reason for States to launch a new round of the chemical-arms race. We are ready to believe that political realism will prevail and that finally the right choice -- the chemical-weapons ban -- will be made in time.

Let me stress one more aspect which renders a CW ban an urgent measure. With the development of the chemical industry one might note that commercial and military chemical substances are somewhat closer to each other than in the