

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.

Canada was an active participant in the conference. Canada's former Secretary of State for External Affairs, Joe Clark, reiterated that Canada has a firm policy of non-production of chemical weapons and does not intend to develop, acquire or stockpile chemical weapons unless they are used against the military forces or civilian population of Canada or its allies.

Although the conference was considered a success, some countries charged Western nations with maintaining a double standard by trying to halt the proliferation of chemical weapons in the Third World, while at the same time maintaining, and continuing to develop chemical weapons themselves. Some Arab states maintained that as long as Israel possessed a presumed nuclear capability, they had the right to possess chemical weapons.

In June 1990, the bilateral discussions between the US and the Soviet Union on chemical weapons resulted in an agreement to begin exchanging and verifying data on their respective chemical weapons capabilities prior to the completion of the chemical weapons convention. As well, on 1 June 1990, the two completed a formal agreement which requires them to cease production of chemical weapons and destroy their chemical weapons stocks over a ten-year period, reaching an agreed level of 5,000 agent tonnes by the end of 2002. Destruction must begin by the end of 1992. Within eight years after a convention enters into force, the two pledge to have reached a level of 500 tonnes each (destroying 98 percent of their stocks).

Perhaps most important has been the effect of the Persian Gulf war. The war against Iraq by the UN multinational coalition raised, for the first time in many years, the spectre of wide-scale use of chemical and biological weapons in warfare. As UN sanctions and then war began, it was known that Iraq had a chemical weapons capability and possibly biological weapons. It was also known that Iraq had used chemical weapons in its war against Iran as well as against its own population. These factors made clear both the need to complete and implement a global chemical weapons ban and the fragile nature of the process.

During the war, chemical and biological weapons facilities in Iraq were high on the priority list of targets bombed in the air campaign. In the end, chemical and biological weapons were not used