

(Mr. Fields, United States)

from other delegations, particularly with respect to any additional verification arrangements which would reduce the problems of possible undeclared stockpiles and facilities.

We recognize, too, that on reading this lengthy document questions may arise. We welcome your questions and will do our best to respond promptly. We are anxious to explain our approach. In fact, our delegation is tentatively planning to hold, in the near future, an informal session open to all delegations for the express purpose of receiving and responding to your questions and comments.

Vice-President Bush pointed out that a chemical weapons ban is long overdue and urged that efforts toward this long-sought goal be intensified. The United States delegation is ready to engage in intensive negotiations on a chemical weapons ban. We have once again augmented our delegation with our best experts. Our interest is in solving problems so that a convention can be achieved as soon as possible, and we sense that most delegations here share that ardent desire.

But, speaking frankly, the first three weeks of work on a chemical weapons ban this year have been discouraging. It has been quite clear that a small group, led by the Soviet delegation, has thwarted any achievement of concrete results. We call upon the Soviet Union to join with us and other members of the Committee at our 1985 session to find ways to overcome the difficult issues which have prevented progress -- especially those pertaining to verification and compliance. As we have repeatedly made clear, we are prepared to consider any and all channels, including bilateral negotiations, that promise to be productive. We must have reason, however, to expect that bilateral negotiations would be productive rather than simply a device to draw a cloak of secrecy around these vital negotiations. Thus far, we have had no reason to be optimistic on this point.

We have repeatedly stated that for such negotiations to be fruitful, the Soviet Union needs to demonstrate, rather than simply profess, that it is genuinely ready to work out and accept effective provisions to verify compliance with a chemical weapons prohibition. And the Soviet Union must also show the United States and the rest of the world that it will abide by existing agreements in this area if meaningful progress is to be made.

It is sobering to realize that the chemical weapons Working Group is entering the fourth year of its existence. Considerable useful work has been accomplished, but the pace is much too slow. The work can and must be accelerated. I would like to outline some suggestions as to how this could be accomplished.