

international cooperation. Following this, an exchange of information on research facilities, biological products and the occurrence of rare diseases began in the autumn of 1987 and has continued annually. A third review conference is scheduled for the autumn of 1991.

The early success of the Biological Weapons Convention did not influence the negotiations on chemical weapons. In spite of continued work through the 1970s at the Conference on Disarmament (CD), it was not until the early to mid-1980s that the goal of a convention completely banning chemical weapons appeared within reach. In 1982 and 1984, the Soviet Union and the US respectively, tabled draft treaties for a chemical weapons convention.

In 1985, the US and the Soviet Union agreed to initiate bilateral discussions on chemical weapons limits, in addition to the ongoing work at the CD. Since then, considerable progress towards a complete treaty has been made. However, while important advances have been achieved, there have been worrying developments on the international scene, including allegations that chemical weapons have been used. Since 1980, the UN Secretary-General has conducted several inquiries to ascertain the truth of such charges. A series of UN reports, beginning in 1984, confirmed that chemical weapons had been used in the Gulf War by Iraq against Iran. On 1 March 1988, Iraq was again reported to have used chemical weapons -- this time against its own Kurdish population. On 26 April 1988, the UN Secretary-General presented a report on the use of chemical weapons in the Iran-Iraq war to the Security Council. Although the report indicated the use of both mustard and nerve gas in the conflict, it did not identify the countries responsible for such action. Both Iran and Iraq are signatories of the Geneva Protocol.

Allegations have also been made about the intentions of Libya. In 1988, the US announced that Libya was building a chemical warfare complex at Rabta, about eighty kilometres southwest of Tripoli. Although Libya denied the charges, US accusations and presentation of evidence continued. It also became clear that the technology used by Libya had been obtained from companies in West Germany and Japan. The issue arose again in March 1990 when a US Government spokesman announced that there was now evidence that Libya was actually producing chemical weapons. The US refused to rule out the possibility that it might undertake a military operation in order to destroy the facility in question.

Prompted by the negative impact of such events, an international conference of 149 states was held in Paris from 7 to 11 January 1989. During the conference, twelve more states announced that they would sign the Protocol. The Final Declaration of the Conference incorporated four points: the commitment of the participants not to use chemical weapons (reaffirming the validity of the Geneva Protocol); the necessity and urgency of concluding a chemical weapons ban; the need for states to exercise self-restraint and act responsibly until a comprehensive ban comes into force; and full