

(Mr. Velayati, Islamic Republic of Iran)

... The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in the region and the indiscriminate use of chemical weapons in the past decade are now coupled with the spectre of their possible use in the Persian Gulf war. Any such use will undoubtedly bring about unpredictable consequences whose implications could be catastrophic for all. Even talk here and there by officials of the warring parties is dangerous.

It is even more alarming that not only threats exist of the possible use of chemical weapons, but there is even reference to a possible resort to nuclear arms. Aside from an immediate need to prevent such a disastrous situation in this conflict, one is now more inclined to insist, for the long term, that any commitment regarding weapons of mass destruction ought to be comprehensive and include chemical weapons and nuclear weapons as well as sophisticated conventional weaponry. With regard to nuclear weapons, one could now conclude that accession to the non-proliferation Treaty by all States seems a necessary requirement.

The draft convention on chemical weapons should also be freed of any discriminatory provisions. It should enhance the security of all nations. Ideas such as the retention of chemical weapon stocks, whatever the pretext, will give the impression of the military utility of such weapons and will be detrimental to our common cause.

Furthermore, universality is the keyword for our work in this regard. The incentives for joining the convention and disincentives for those who remain outside will play a determining role in this respect. Since underdevelopment poses a threat to the security of developing countries, any provision which may harm the legitimate development of civil chemical industry should be prevented.

But still, the most significant task to be tackled in order to ensure universality and prepare suitable ground whereby States would find it safe and secure to join the convention is to maintain a balance at the global, and more importantly at the regional level for the security of States. The fact that the chemical weapons convention would generally enhance the security of States remains valid, but this cannot be sufficient when one comes to the actual point of making a decision to join this convention. For each country, national security reigns supreme. Every State will wish to have enough assurances that its security will not be diminished through joining the convention. I must add that this is particularly relevant in regions which are hotbeds of tension and where chemical weapons have already been used.

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