

Mr. LOWITZ (United States of America):

The most noteworthy progress has been recorded in the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons. The Chairman of the Committee, Ambassador Cromartie of the United Kingdom, is to be congratulated for overseeing a year in which significant elaboration and restructuring of the draft text of the convention took place. As a result, five articles of the rolling text now appear in a more complete form: these are the articles on the elimination of chemical weapons production facilities, on chemical weapon stockpile destruction, on activities not to be prohibited by the Convention, on the consultative committee, and on consultation, co-operation and fact-finding. In addition, progress is reflected in the elaboration of four annexes addressing supertoxic lethal chemicals, key precursors, large volume commercial chemicals which could be used as weapons, and principles, methods and organization of the elimination of chemical weapons.

Last August, my delegation expressed cautious optimism for these negotiations. It seems to me that this optimism was justified, and that it can again be expressed for their future course.

This is not to say, of course, that complete agreement has been reached on any of the new texts. Bracketed sections, footnotes, and incomplete text reflect that many important issues have not yet been resolved. All areas require additional work. Key outstanding issues include the declaration of stockpiles, non-production in the civil industry, and challenge inspection. And work has barely begun on working out detailed verification procedures.

In particular, the United States delegation looks forward to a serious consideration of challenge inspection. My delegation would be particularly interested in hearing the detailed views of the Soviet Union on challenge inspection. While a number of States have provided constructive contributions in the area of verification during the session, and the Soviet Union has