

JOINT US-USSR REPORT ON PROGRESS IN THE BILATERAL
NEGOTIATIONS ON THE PROHIBITION OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS

The Delegations of the US and the USSR, guided by the fact that prohibition of chemical weapons is, as was stressed in the Final Document of the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Disarmament, one of the most urgent and vital problems in the area of disarmament, and considering the desire of many member states of the Committee on Disarmament to be informed about the state of affairs at the bilateral negotiations concerned with the preparation of a joint initiative on the prohibition of chemical weapons, have submitted to the Committee on Disarmament joint reports regarding progress at their negotiations. The Delegations of the US and the USSR submitted the last such report on 31 July, 1979 (Document CD/48).

Since that time, two more rounds of the bilateral negotiations on the prohibition of chemical weapons have been held, in the course of which the Delegations of the US and the USSR continued their efforts toward earliest development of a joint initiative on the prohibition of chemical weapons and its presentation for consideration by the Committee on Disarmament. Given the interrelationship between the various issues, the two sides will be able to report definitive agreement in any particular area only after they have completed their negotiations. The present report of the two delegations reflects, however, the current status of the negotiations.

1. The two sides proceed from the premise that the scope of the prohibition in the future convention would be determined on the basis of the general purpose criterion. They believe that the parties to a convention should assume the obligation never to develop, produce, otherwise acquire, stockpile or retain super-toxic lethal, other lethal or other harmful chemicals, or precursors of such chemicals; the obligation should not extend to those substances in these categories which are intended for nonhostile purposes or military purposes not involving the use of chemical weapons, provided their types and quantities are consistent with such purposes. The two sides also believe that the parties to a convention should undertake never to develop, produce, otherwise acquire, stockpile or retain munitions or devices specifically designed to cause death or other harm through the toxic properties of chemicals released as a result of the employment of these munitions or devices, or equipment specifically designed for use directly in connexion with the employment of such munitions or devices. No agreement has yet been reached in some specific aspects of these proposed undertakings, including the extent to which irritants, toxins and precursors should be covered, and the two sides are seeking to resolve their differences.