

(Mr. Lowitz, United States)

Mr. Reagan stressed that the United States is doing its part in the bilateral negotiations and in other negotiations. This includes, of course, the negotiations on chemical weapons at this Conference. The President concluded by saying that, "with an equal commitment by our Soviet negotiating partners, real progress is now within our reach."

The new proposal by the United States and those prior proposals that we have tabled represent a sound basis for that progress. Our new proposal is one that gives added substance to United States commitments to leave no stone unturned in its efforts to resolve the fundamental security issues posed by the threat of nuclear weapons. At the same time, the remarks of President Reagan succinctly place these efforts in the larger context of other efforts needed to further peace and stability. We all need to recognize that fundamental political differences are at the root of the security concerns that lead States to possess weapons. Thus, resolution of the threat to international security posed by nuclear weapons cannot, in the last analysis, be accomplished without also resolving other security concerns posed by imbalances in conventional and in chemical weapons.

CD/PV.343

36

Mr. JESSEL (France) (translated from French): We have heard today a number of major statements. I should like briefly to take up an issue raised by one of the speakers, the problem of the use of chemical weapons referred to by His Excellency Mr. Velayati, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran. May I first of all recall that on many occasions in the past my Government has emphasized and deplored the serious consequences of the prolongation of the disastrous conflict between Iraq and Iran not only for those two countries but also for the integrity of the neighbouring States and the security of the region, as well as peace and international stability.

Furthermore, on various occasions France has condemned quite categorically any use anywhere of the toxic warfare agents prohibited by the 1925 Geneva Protocol. In doing so, my Government has merely been adhering to what has been France's unswerving policy since the signing of the Protocol more than 60 years ago. It has further reason for doing so in view of its responsibilities as a depositary State of the Convention. I recalled this in my statement before the Conference on 18 June 1985, and I recall it once again today.

As you know, the 1925 Convention does not include any verification procedure. That is why, pending the conclusion of the Convention currently being negotiated in our Conference, France and a number of other States submitted a resolution providing for interim verification procedures to the General Assembly of the United Nations, which adopted it. In this connection, France welcomes the decision just taken by the United Nations Secretary-General to send a fact-finding mission. We welcome the Secretary-General's action, which is in our opinion in keeping with the spirit of resolution 37/98 D, which serves the same purpose and has the same objective.