

(Mr. Fields, United States)

In an effort to meet the concerns expressed by the Soviet Union, the United States is willing to consider the possibility that a party could move its chemical-weapon stocks before declaration from their original storage sites in combat units to regional depots. Since only these regional depots and not the combat units would contain chemical weapons, only the locations of these depots would have to be declared. Thus, the locations of combat units would not be revealed. The location of such depots would be declared within 30 days after the convention enters into force for the State.

The second pivotal issue I want to discuss today is the problem of providing confidence that chemical weapons are not being produced under the guise of commercial chemical production. The United States strongly supports the approach outlined by the United Kingdom in its recent Working Paper CD/514. High-risk and medium-risk chemicals would be identified in lists. The level of verification would depend on the level of risk, with high-risk chemicals being monitored by systematic international on-site inspection on a random basis.

This approach would provide effective verification without jeopardizing commercial secrets. We believe that it should meet all of the concerns expressed by the Soviet delegation about misuse of the chemical industry.

The Soviet delegation has repeatedly emphasized the importance of ensuring that commercial facilities are not used for the production of chemical weapons. But what is the Soviet solution to this problem? To the best of our knowledge, no comprehensive Soviet proposal has yet been presented, although the problem has been recognized for years.

The Soviet Union has proposed to prohibit production of methylphosphorus compounds for commercial purposes. The stated objective of this proposal is to eliminate the possibility that certain nerve-agent precursors, which contain methylphosphorus bonds, could be produced clandestinely in commercial chemical plants. This proposal, however, does not take into account the realities of modern chemical technology. In fact, chemical plants which produce ethylphosphorus compounds could, in most cases, easily produce methylphosphorus compounds. But under the Soviet proposal such plants would not be affected at all.

Here again, the Soviet position appears to be internally inconsistent. It would fail to achieve its stated objective. Yet at the same time, it would interfere substantially in the important and legitimate uses of chemicals for peaceful purposes.

Progress on this pivotal issue requires first of all that the Soviet Union present a clear and comprehensive proposal of its own, if it disagrees with the proposals of the United Kingdom and the United States. In developing its position I hope the Soviet delegation will reconsider its unworkable proposal to ban the production of methylphosphorus compounds.

The third pivotal issue is challenge inspection. I have already described the United States "open invitation" approach in my statement of 19 July. This approach has been rejected by the distinguished Soviet representative, Ambassador Issraelyan, as unrealistic, discriminatory, nihilistic, tension-provoking, and purposely unacceptable. But Ambassador Issraelyan has not denied that our proposal would be effective. To paraphrase Shakespeare, "the (gentleman) doth protest too much, methinks".

While the Soviet position has not been presented to the Conference in a clear and comprehensive way, its outlines are readily apparent. It is an approach designed to provide absolute protection from any challenge inspection that the