

(Mr. Nazarkin, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics)

He asserted that the Soviet Union until recently denied that it possessed any chemical weapons. That is an incorrect assertion. Until last year official Soviet representatives neither asserted nor denied that we have chemical weapons. This is not a new formula. The United States, for example, uses this formula with regard to the presence of nuclear weapons on its ships. This is the first inaccuracy which the Ambassador of the United States permitted himself.

The Ambassador of the United States also stated that the Soviet Union has the largest stockpile of chemical weapons in the world. We have declared the size of our stockpile. Certainly, if the United States representative really wished to compare Soviet and United States stockpile, it would be logical to cite data on the size of the United States stockpile. As long as that has not been done, we consider statements that the Soviet Union has the largest stockpile to be unfounded.

I intentionally did not raise the question of the mandate of the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons at this meeting because this issue remains the subject of consultations between delegations. But as the representative of the United States has raised the issue, I will also briefly set out our approach to the future mandate of the Ad hoc Committee.

The United States insists on keeping last year's mandate, which contains a restrictive condition - it does not allow for the Ad hoc Committee to complete its work on the Convention. Quite frankly we fail to understand why it is necessary to keep this restrictive provision in the mandate, bearing in mind the progress that has been made in the negotiations.

The United States said merely that in the course of this session, if the need arises, the Conference could amend the mandate of the Ad hoc Committee by removing the restrictive provision. But the point is - why waste time on procedural discussions in the course of the session if this issue can be settled now? Naturally, in deleting this restrictive provision the participants in the negotiations are in no way obligated to embark immediately on the final drafting of the text. When the need arises in the course of the session, the Ad hoc Committee will be free to get down to drafting the text of the draft Convention. In any event there is a need to delete a provision whose sole function is to hinder the completion of work on the Convention this year. The Soviet delegation considers that it would be desirable to delete this restrictive provision from the mandate at the present stage, so as not to waste time on reviewing the mandate.

My last point concerns the initiation of binary weapon production in the United States. At a time when real prospects have emerged for the conclusion of the Convention this step by the United States is in our view nothing other than an attempt to torpedo the process of chemical disarmament, a manifestation of lack of respect for the efforts of States participating in the multilateral negotiations on the prohibition of this type of weapon of mass destruction, and for the repeated calls of the General Assembly of the United Nations to step up these negotiations. This was the assessment given by the Foreign Ministry of the USSR in its statement of 26 December 1987.