

Mr. BATSANOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (translated from Russian): Today's statement by the Soviet delegation, in which we intend to touch on some aspects of the problem of a chemical weapons ban, will be fairly brief. The point is that recently the mass media have been putting out a number of sensational reports on the development of the Soviet-American dialogue in this field. Specifically, these reports relate to the new Soviet initiatives put forward at the meeting between the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the USSR, E.A. Shevardnadze, and the United States Secretary of State, J. Baker, in Paris on 29 July this year. While the reports on the whole present an objective picture of the thrust of the Soviet proposals, they contained a number of inaccuracies. Furthermore - and this is quite understandable - we are continuing to receive questions and requests for clarification on these points. As requested, the Soviet delegation intends to respond to these today.

First of all I wish to confirm that for the Soviet Union the early conclusion of an effectively monitored convention on the general and complete prohibition of chemical weapons is a priority issue. The Soviet Union is making every effort to resolve the most difficult questions standing in the way of an early ban on chemical weapons. We are making active use of our international contacts to discuss matters relating to chemical disarmament, and are doing our utmost to promote intensification of the negotiating process in order to reach agreement expeditiously.

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