

(Mr. Waldegrave, United Kingdom)

seriously - here in the Conference on Disarmament - for a global ban. The United Kingdom feels an increasing urgency about this. Our response must not be simply to bypass the work which remains to be done, but to put our backs into doing that work. Hence the detailed papers we keep tabling.

It is sometimes argued that the acquisition of chemical weapons is a justifiable response to the possession or acquisition of nuclear or conventional weapons by other States - whether suspected or actual. This is a false argument. There is no evidence that chemical weapons have ever had this deterrent effect in the past. But what we can predict is that, wherever they are introduced, chemical weapons are likely to have a destabilizing effect on the local balance of power as the other side looks for ways to catch up. In the medium term, everyone will gain from the verified, total ban which is the prime aim of this Conference. As for the threat from nuclear weapons, the best way to reduce that is not to oppose them with other weapons, but through a common effort to reduce existing numbers, and prevent nuclear proliferation.

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(Mr. Kosin, Yugoslavia)

... The next priority item - the universal and comprehensive prohibition of chemical weapons - represents a historic challenge for the Conference and for the multilateral approach to disarmament. It is not only the negotiating capacity of the Conference that is at stake here, but also the credibility of the repeated declarations of political commitment. The declaration adopted by the Paris Conference was a welcome expression of an universal political consensus on the need to conclude the convention on chemical weapons as soon as possible. Any hesitation now would have a serious impact not only on the work of the Conference but on the dynamics of disarmament as a whole.

The Conference has already done considerable work on a number of complex conceptual and technical issues. While mindful of the differences on various substantive aspects, I nevertheless believe that the convention is within our reach and that the degree of agreement in principle is greater than it may seem at first sight. Ambassador Morel continues to inject new energy into the work of the chemical weapons Committee. However, it is our impression that the Ad hoc Committee has not yet tackled thoroughly the substance of certain key problems.

I wish to address only some of them. First of all, we should abandon any ambition that the convention should cover every single detail, any possible event or situation. We would never reach our goal in that way. The demands for strict control of the production of chemicals, even in the smallest facilities, and the overplaying of the importance of protecting commercial secrets, fall into this category. By adopting a more rational and realistic approach to these two questions we could more easily come to satisfactory solutions.