

APPENDIX VII

**THE USE OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS IN THE GULF:
AN IRANIAN VIEWPOINT
by G.H. Behtash**

[Remarks have been condensed and, in some cases, paraphrased.]

In the name of God:

I am happy to be here tonight, but I am also sad, because the subject is a really painful one. I am pleased to be able to share with you the Iranian perspective on this subject. I am also convinced that these kinds of conferences can have a significant role in helping to bring about an appropriate understanding of the different aspects of the most horrible weapons of the present century.

I myself come from Iran, a country that has had recent, first-hand experience of the horror and inhumanity of such weapons. However, because our country has been the victim of attack by chemical weapons, we are committed to seeing them entirely outlawed, for the benefit of all humanity. Chemical and biological weapons must never be used against any man, woman or child in any country, in any situation. That is our solid position, one arrived at after having experienced such weapons ourselves.

Of course, such weapons had been used before, primarily during the First World War. Following the war, international indignation led to the Geneva Protocol of 1925 banning use of chemical warfare agents. But, of late, let me remind you that this protocol has been forgotten, ignored, and repeatedly violated.

Resolutions 612 and 620 of the United Nations Security Council give ample proof of use of these weapons. More than 250 incidents were documented by UN investigators. Please let me give you only a few examples; the list is much longer.

As early as 1981, Iraqi artillery bombarded the Iranian city of Khorramshar with chemical shells. Two years later, Iraq's air force bombarded the city of Piranshahr, killing and wounding more than 300. Early in 1986, Iraq bombarded the Faw-Basra highway, killing and injuring more than 8,500. Later that year, Khorramshar was again attacked, with more than 1,000 victims. And, in June of 1987, the town of Sardasht was attacked from the air with chemical agents, killing or wounding more than 8,000 civilians.

Finally, just last year, came a great criminal act. On 18 March 1989, the Iraqi town of Halabja was bombarded from the air with chemical weapons by the Iraqi air force, leaving about 5,000 people dead, most of them women and children.

The first use of chemical weapons in 1981 against Iran was a litmus test of international reaction. Over the following years, international indifference was appalling; there was a complete absence of any proper response to this threat from the world community.