

(Mr. Issraelyan, USSR)

Had those proposals of the Soviet Union been accepted by the other parties to the negotiations, chemical weapons would have long since been eliminated and there would be no need for the difficult and protracted discussions we are presently engaged in on this issue.

What is today the main obstacle, the main hindrance to the progress of chemical-weapon negotiations? Apparently, the continuing efforts by some of the parties to impose their own approaches and their own selfish perceptions on others. This attitude is utterly unsound. We are convinced that in the search for mutually acceptable solutions, in particular to key problems, one should bear in mind the specific political, economic and defence interests of each party, as well as remember the historical experience of every nation and people. I wish particularly to stress this. Some, and namely the Soviet Union, which has lost dozens of millions of lives as a result of foreign intervention and aggression, have been taught by the hard experience of their history to be especially cautious about various proposals calling for "openness", "publicity", unlimited verification and other dubious ideas. Meanwhile others, who have not had to go through the same ordeals as our people has, are proceeding mainly from the "experience" of petty suspicions, trumped up and blown out of all proportion by their own propaganda.

We were recently told in this chamber that, and I quote, "anyone with nothing to hide can agree to specific verification measures". This is probably true, provided that the one applying such measures acts in good faith and without ulterior motives. But given our historical experience, can we rest assured that such will always be the case?

The distinctive feature of Soviet proposals is precisely that we are not trying to force on others provisions which might impair their national security or inhibit their economy. Let us look, for instance, at the Soviet Union's approach to the question of chemicals used for permitted purposes.

This approach would spare the civilian, commercial chemical industry the considerable burden of intrusive outside verification procedures which would otherwise have extended virtually to each individual enterprise. At the same time, for the purposes of the convention, we feel obliged to propose several specific restrictions on the operations of chemical industries. We are suggesting that the production of supertoxic lethal chemicals should be restricted, as well as that of one particular class of substances which poses the greatest threat while having almost no peaceful uses -- namely the methyl-phosphorus compounds. Such restrictions could not do any significant damage to any party to the future convention. We would like to recall in this connection that limitations on the production of certain chemicals are not completely unusual. It is common knowledge that pesticides are not nearly as dangerous to humans as are supertoxic lethal chemicals. Yet the production of some pesticides is actually subject to definite restrictions.

Indeed, do the peaceful branches of chemical industry in fact depend on supertoxic lethal chemicals as greatly as is sometimes portrayed by certain delegations? Would it not be wiser to consider including in the convention a provision allowing for such amendments with regard to supertoxic lethal chemicals and methyl-phosphorus compounds as may be required in view of scientific and technological developments and industrial needs in the future?