

(Mr. Vejvoda, Czechoslovakia)

of the term "chemical weapons", the question of the sphere of activity to be encompassed by the prohibition or the much discussed problem whether the prohibition of use of chemical weapons should be included in the future convention. The problem of the use of chemical weapons has been widely discussed in the Committee in recent years and numerous arguments have been raised both supporting and opposing its inclusion. I do not believe that going through all these arguments once again would serve any purpose. However, at this stage when we are, hopefully, about to embark on the formulation of a composite draft text of a chemical weapons convention, my delegation would like to record here briefly its position on the subject.

As far as the use of chemical weapons is concerned, Czechoslovakia considers it clearly and unequivocally prohibited by the Geneva Protocol of 1925. We maintain that the Protocol is an important international instrument which has since its adoption played a positive role. In connection with the proposals to strengthen the Protocol by including the prohibition of the use of chemical weapons in the future chemical weapons convention; we do not share the view that by doing so we can strengthen the Protocol whatsoever. Quite the contrary, for the doubled prohibition of the use of chemical weapons would inevitably lead to the weakening of the Protocol and to the creation of an unnecessary precedent. All our efforts should be aimed at the achievement of and ensuring compliance with a convention which would leave no chemical weapons in the arsenals of States. If this is achieved, and we deem it feasible, no question of use can arise.

Mr. ISSRAELYAN (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (translated from Russian):  
Mr. Chairman, in accordance with its programme of work the Committee on Disarmament is today discussing an issue which requires particular consideration and attention on the part of all delegations represented here. The exceptional importance of the complete prohibition and elimination of chemical weapons is self-evident.

The times are past when the danger represented by chemical weapons was, as it were, overshadowed by the horror and dread that nuclear weapons inspired in mankind. For who today is not aware that modern chemical weapons also have a frightening capacity to sow Black Death on earth? Chemical weapons are, moreover, particularly barbaric because they endanger above all the unprotected civilian population. There is a real and growing threat of the widespread use of chemical weapons. Thus the question is whether we are going now, immediately, to put a stop to the chemical arms race orgy, or whether we are going to miss the opportunity, perhaps irrevocably.

The Soviet Union is decisively in favour of the speediest possible prohibition of chemical weapons. As President L.I. Brezhnev said in his message to the second special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, "Everything must be done to ensure that chemical weapons have no place on earth. The Soviet Union is a staunch supporter of this goal. We are prepared to reach an agreement without delay on the complete prohibition of chemical weapons and the elimination of stocks of such weapons". The Soviet Union confirmed that this was its approach to the matter by putting forward the "Basic provisions of a convention on the prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons and on their destruction".