

Mr. VEJVODA (Czechoslovakia): Mr. Chairman, in my statement today I wish to address the issue of a chemical weapons convention. Our delegation considers the convention not only a matter of the highest priority in our work, but -- like many others in this room -- also the most promising area for achieving the concrete, positive results so badly needed for disarmament as well as for the Committee itself. We acknowledge with satisfaction that in the Ad Hoc Working Group as well as in all contact groups, the work is going on intensively and seriously, and we highly appreciate the skilful guidance and initiative of Ambassador McPhail of Canada as Chairman of the Working Group.

We took note of several suggestions as to how to make the work of the Group still more effective. There is no doubt that procedures can be always improved. However, the main realistic way to bring the work to a positive and reasonably fast end is to take a political decision to clear the way for real negotiations and the drafting of the convention. The idea that the time has come for such work, expressed by several delegations, has full support on our part.

We can only express our regret at the decision by the United States Senate to allocate \$130 million to begin production of artillery shells and aerial "Big eye" bombs for binary chemical weapons -- a decision indicating the direction of real political interests which are far from disarmament measures.

It is only natural to ask what was the main purpose of such a step. Some opinions were expressed that it was intended to put the Committee on Disarmament under pressure to accelerate the work regarding a chemical weapons convention. At the same time, we all know the heavily scheduled time-table of the working and contact groups, and we can all see that even small delegations are contributing to the work in groups with remarkable activity, doing their best to achieve maximal progress. Should we understand that the United States administration has a different opinion regarding our efforts or even a quite different approach to the Committee on Disarmament as such?

Trying to review the most important results and problems of our work on a chemical weapons convention, I wish to point out the following questions.

Some progress was achieved in the solution of the issue of the prohibition of the use of chemical weapons in the convention. Since there is consensus that nothing in the convention should weaken the Geneva Protocol of 1925, one of the acceptable ways certainly could be to cover the prohibition of use by an explicit reference to the Geneva Protocol of 1925 and its direct relevance for the parties to the convention, as suggested in the contact group -- though some other formulation could be equally acceptable. In any case the discussion in the contact group brought the views very close together, so that a final solution should not be too far off.

A reasonable amount of work was also done with regard to fact-finding procedures and the nature of the evidence which should be available to justify the initiation of a challenge. In our view, the question of evidence is very important: the experience of unsubstantiated allegations, for instance concerning yellow rain, etc., is a warning, because the political consequences, even of evident fakes, tend to be far-reaching. The text elaborated in the contact group certainly is not the language of the treaty, but, in principle, the procedures suggested are reasonable and can serve as a good basis for actual drafting.