

(Mr. Issraelyan, USSR)

We prefer the method of bilateral and multilateral consultations with interested delegations in a joint search for answers to the questions which arise in the course of negotiations. For the information of members of the Committee I will say that the Soviet delegation has already conducted a series of such extremely useful bilateral consultations, in the course of which we ourselves asked questions and we answered the questions of our partners, and we intend to continue this practice. We think that this is far more effective than something more like a quiz game -- you know: question, answer, question, answer. Anyone really interested in finding joint answers will find a constructive partner in the Soviet delegation. I repeat, we are ready to search for answers to any questions which arise in the course of the negotiations, including those concerning the Soviet draft.

I should like to refer to another matter. Every now and then an attempt is made to steer negotiations into the labyrinth of secondary questions at a time when agreement has not been reached on the major questions. Take, for example, these problems of verification. While there is quite a high degree of agreement on the question of scope and, as we believe, the outlines of possible formulations on the scope of the prohibition are emerging, this is not yet the case with regard to verification issues. Nevertheless we sometimes get bogged down in a discussion of highly specialized aspects of verification. We propose that agreement should be reached on basic approaches, where this is possible, of course, and then on the basis of such agreed approaches -- general approaches -- we can work out the details.

The Soviet draft "Basic provisions", whose significance has been acknowledged by almost all delegations in the Committee, are a demonstration of the Soviet Union's interest in the speediest possible conclusion of a convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons, and evidence of its goodwill. At the same time, we should also like particularly to stress the fact that we are hoping -- we are very much hoping -- for a demonstration of goodwill from the other side also.

This refers in particular to the United States delegation, which the other day, and also today, expressed in the Committee its "disappointment" because, allegedly, the Soviet Union and other socialist countries do not wish to take part in serious discussions. The slightest acquaintance with the work of the Committee, of its working groups and contact groups, would suffice to arrive at quite the opposite conclusion. It would seem that some members of the Committee are judging others by themselves. We, for example, are not in the habit of agreeing, on the one hand, to the setting up within the Committee of a working group on a priority aspect of disarmament -- a nuclear-weapon-test ban, in this instance -- and then of stating bluntly that the time is not yet ripe for the conclusion of an agreement on the complete prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests. Judge for yourselves: who takes a serious approach to the work of the Committee on Disarmament, and who does not?

We should like to ask the United States delegation a simple and direct question, which certainly does not call for the assistance of experts: how does it see its own path towards the achievement of mutually acceptable solutions, and its readiness to take account of the position of other participants in the negotiations, including the Soviet Union? Negotiations can be successful if all those taking part in them strive for mutually acceptable solutions -- we repeat, mutually acceptable solutions.