

(Mr. Friedersdorf, United States of America)

It is understandable that some become frustrated and impatient for more tangible results. But, as our delegation has cautioned before, and as recent sessions confirm, we have many serious issues yet to be resolved - issues such as whether challenge inspection should involve a right of refusal; how to verify the accuracy of declarations; how to monitor the chemical industry so as to ensure non-production; what to do about old stocks; which chemicals need to go on the various lists; the organizational structure and the mechanics for administering a convention; allocation of costs; economic development and technical assistance; the protection of confidential information; security during the destruction phase; prior multilateral data exchange; and what production will be permitted where. No single State, or even group of States, is blocking progress on any of these issues. The fact is that we cannot expect consensus on these issues until national views are formulated and enunciated, and until differences are resolved through serious debate. This will take considerable time, as anyone determined about these negotiations knows. For this reason, it is not only unrealistic but unproductive to speculate that a convention can be completed before the third special session or by some specified, artificial deadline. Experience shows that such reckless assertions merely engender disappointment and an illusion of failure when the optimistic speculation proves to be wrong.

It is this same consideration that militates against any change in the mandate of the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons at this time. A review of the unresolved issues confronting the Committee must lead to the conclusion that we have not reached the stage of final drafting, yet the suggested changes to the mandate would create a different impression. It is better to avoid creating unreasonable expectations. The present mandate in no manner inhibits, obstructs or impedes the work of the Ad hoc Committee, and it can easily be changed when change is appropriate.

The United States delegation will continue to be active in all our deliberations because we remain committed to negotiation of a verifiable, comprehensive and effective international convention on the prohibition and destruction of chemical weapons encompassing all chemical-weapons-capable States.

Until we can achieve that goal, however, the United States will maintain a small, modernized CW retaliatory capability as a necessary deterrent against the threat of chemical attack.