

(Mr. Vorontsov, USSR)

An area in which the most urgent action is today required from the Conference is indisputably that of negotiations on the prohibition of chemical weapons. The Soviet Union considers it essential that every effort be made to complete the elaboration of a convention on the prohibition and elimination of chemical weapons this year. Such a possibility does really exist, whatever those whom it does not suit may say. To drag out this work now, when most of the questions of principle have been solved, would be truly criminal. I have a suggestion to make to the participants in the Conference: let chemical disarmament become the first example of peaceful, rather than military progress in international politics.

The preparation of a convention on the elimination and prohibition of chemical weapons would mean a significant increase in trust, including in the military sphere, and would give the lead for the solution of complicated problems of disarmament. It would be a striking confirmation of the viability of the multilateral approach to disarmament and would greatly increase the prestige of the Conference, which bears full responsibility vis-à-vis the international community for negotiations on chemical weapons.

It is gratifying to note that progress achieved in many areas at the negotiations is the result of a series of Soviet proposals and steps made in the Conference on Disarmament last year, as well as of constructive initiatives by many other countries, including the United Kingdom, Sweden and Pakistan.

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We are not closing our eyes to the difficulties. Nor do we consider that, having put forward our proposals, we can sleep on our laurels. I should like to inform the members of the Conference that our experts in Moscow are continuing their intensive work on the search for breakthrough on the questions outstanding.

At the same time, the efforts of a mere one country, and even the efforts of a mere majority of countries, are not enough for the drawing up of the convention. We hope that the United States will truly join the search for compromises. Now at the negotiations the time has come when what is needed is the ability to rise above "author's pride" in one's own approaches and to put to the forefront the task of finding a common approach. There is no other way to success. This applies both to the United States and to all other countries, including the Soviet Union.

And yet one further point. There remain in the negotiations few unagreed major questions that require a political solution. However, there are a lot of, as it were, minor technical issues, which as a whole make up a swamp that is difficult to cross. Let's not get bogged down in it, let's take a critical look at whether everything that is now being discussed at length in working groups and sub-groups is really necessary for an effective Convention.

I should like to wish every success to the Ambassador of Sweden, Rolf Ekéus, as the future Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons in the organization of the final stage of the agreeing of a convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons. May Mr. Ekéus go down in diplomatic history as the last leader of negotiations on this issue.