

(Mr. Ledogar, United States)

only two countries in this room which have publicly declared themselves to be chemical-weapon States and taken active steps to begin eliminating their capabilities. For our part, the United States' new chemical weapons destruction facility at Johnston Atoll in the Pacific began test destruction operations last month with nerve-agent-filled munitions, in preparation for full-scale operations in 1991. This past June we also successfully completed destruction of the entire United States stockpile of the incapacitating agent BZ.

The plain truth is that as I speak the United States is chemically disarming. Not only has the United States ceased its production of chemical weapons, but it has also actually begun the process of dismantling nearly all its deterrent capability.

In June, the Soviet and United States delegations jointly tabled a proposal that our two Presidents thought might help promote universality. In that agreement, our two countries agreed to cease production and begin destroying our stocks before the multilateral treaty is even concluded. We have further agreed that, within eight years of the treaty's entry into force, we will both have destroyed all our chemical weapon stocks except for 500 agent tons - in other words, between 98 and 99 per cent of what we started with. If at that point we have been joined by the countries that have turned what began as a bilateral problem into a global threat, then we will destroy the remaining stocks as well.

The United States and the USSR did not make this proposal to divide these negotiations or, as some claim, to turn the comprehensive convention into a partial ban. The only way it will be a partial ban is if others - many of whom are here today - fail to do their part. We do not want or intend to retain chemical weapons indefinitely. Quite the contrary. The United States wishes to see all chemical weapons - and I emphasize the word "all" - eliminated. But we will not be the only chemical-weapon States to eliminate our stocks, while others who are part of the global CW threat stay out of the convention. This would plainly be discrimination in reverse, something we are astonished to hear advocated by countries traditionally so committed to equality.

No one here today can know with any certainty which States will have adhered and which will have chemical weapons eight years into the treaty régime. The United States believes stability is best enhanced by assessing the situation together at the eight-year conference. If our critics have constructive ideas for better ways to accomplish this, we will be happy to hear them.

A similar misunderstanding of United States intentions seems to centre on how this convention deals with responses to the use of chemical weapons during the destruction period. On the one hand, some delegations see this issue very narrowly as the types of assistance others would be obligated to give to them. Others see it as a way of pre-establishing procedures and arrangements for facilitating and expediting the provision of assistance in the event they or others are attacked or threatened with chemical weapons. The United States is willing to discuss various approaches to assistance, but we consider assistance to be only one aspect of how to respond to the use of CW. Another