



FIRST COMMITTEE
52nd meeting
held on
Friday, 4 December 1981
at 10.30 a.m.
New York

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 52ND MEETING

Chairman: Mr. GOLOB (Yugoslavia)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 42: CHEMICAL AND BACTERIOLOGICAL (BIOLOGICAL) WEAPONS

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Distr. GENERAL

A/C.1/36/PV.52
13 January 1982

ENGLISH

The meeting was called to order at 10.50 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 42

CHEMICAL AND BACTERIOLOGICAL (BIOLOGICAL) WEAPONS (A/C.1/36/5, 10, 16; A/C.1/36/L.54 and L.62; A/36/27, 81, 104, 121, 157, 173, 207, 229, 232, 254, 312, 509, 549, 566, 584 and 664)

Mr. KERGIN (Canada): In being a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.1/36/L.54, which would extend the mandate of the Group of Experts investigating the reports of use of chemical weapons, my delegation is concerned above all with arms control and disarmament: in this instance, the banning of chemical weapons. This draft resolution, therefore, is part of wider efforts by Canada and many other countries towards the attainment of a comprehensive ban on chemical weapons and the destruction of existing stocks. In this connexion, three weeks ago Canada introduced into this Committee a draft resolution (A.C.1/36/L.45) on this subject which equally reflects our concerns, in a different context, about chemical weapons. That draft resolution almost received consensus.

As is common knowledge, the 1925 Geneva Protocol prohibits the use of chemical weapons and bacteriological warfare. The Canadian authorities consider, however, that, in the light of reports of alleged use of chemical weapons and/or bacteriological warfare, it would be illogical not to attempt to maintain the credibility of the prohibition of the use of chemical weapons contained in the Geneva Protocol. Thus, our efforts towards a comprehensive prohibition must be complemented by activities to maintain the effectiveness of that agreement.

Because my delegation believes that the Geneva Protocol of 1925 is of fundamental importance to individuals, as well as to States, we deem it essential to address in a sustained manner any allegations that provisions of the Protocol are being breached. My delegation considers, therefore, that the United Nations, representing the international community, has an obligation to conduct an impartial and thorough investigation into the allegations.

(Mr. Kergin, Canada)

The Group of Experts has made a good start but, as its report states, it has not yet been able to visit a country which has recently given its permission to allow the Group to carry out an investigation on its territory. In the view of my delegation, the furtherance of this investigation is an essential part of the mandate contained in resolution 35/144 C. Furthermore, the Group's work remains incomplete because it has not been able to study in depth the information coming to light in the last two or three months, information which my authorities are treating with great seriousness. Delegations will also have noted that the report refers to certain specific aspects of the investigation which could not be completed in the time available. In this connexion, paragraphs 84, 94 and 98 of the report indicate the need for continued action on information received during the course of the investigations.

Beyond the immediate question is the broader issue: the continuation of the Group's work, and its outcome - whatever the Group's findings may be - will have a bearing on further efforts to strengthen the Geneva Protocol.

If the Protocol had a proper verification provision, this Committee would not have to spend time launching and extending an international investigation. As the Group's report in paragraph 48 says:

"the ideal approach for experts would be to conduct an on-site examination of the alleged attack as soon as possible". (A/36/613, annex, para.48)

My delegation, therefore, considers that the reference in the penultimate preambular paragraph of the draft resolution concerning the need to devise appropriate procedures for the impartial collection and analysis of samples is important. I hope that at some future date this Committee will seriously consider what steps might be taken to add a verification mechanism to the Protocol taking into account any views which the Expert Group may have.

Finally, I should like to emphasize the apolitical intent of this resolution. My delegation is not and does not wish to engage in rhetoric, or make accusations. Nonetheless, it is possible that certain States consider that this investigation is somehow directed against them. It was therefore not without serious thought that Canada decided to join in efforts to have an impartial and thorough investigation of the allegations of chemical weapons

(Mr. Kergin, Canada)

use. In this regard, we reached this decision only after carefully weighing the indications which we collected independently and which aroused in us certain important concerns.

Now that the Group of Experts has made such a good start in investigating this complex and sensitive matter, I hope that this Committee will extend its mandate to allow it to continue and thus complete its work.

Mr. HANDL (Czechoslovakia): The position of the Czechoslovak delegation on the investigation of reports on the alleged use of chemical weapons has already been expressed in our negative vote on the respective draft resolution 35/144 C last year. At the time, when the said question appeared on our Committee's agenda at the request of some Western countries, the Czechoslovak and other delegations were of the view that the United Nations should not become a place for venting construed allegations and rumours of an unclear origin, or in fact slander, to the detriment of constructive efforts to resolve the pressing problems of disarmament.

Our position has been fully borne out by further developments and, by the way, is obvious from the first sight also of the report submitted by the Secretary-General, document A/36/613. In our opinion, the situation has now reached a stage when it is necessary to close this chapter in the activities of our Committee and thus to release the time and means needed for the solution of other, much more important and quite real problems such as, among others, the prohibition and destruction of the stockpiles of chemical weapons. The reasons for this course of action are clear.

The fact must first of all be taken into consideration that the whole fuss around the investigation of the so-called reports of the alleged use of chemical weapons does not in the least help the solution of the main issue, which is the conclusion of an international treaty on the complete prohibition of these weapons and destruction of their stockpiles. On the contrary, it draws attention away from it and, by creating an atmosphere of uncertainty, suspicion and propagandistic hysteria in the information media of certain countries, it plays straight into the hands of those who oppose the prohibition of chemical weapons and consequently are trying to foil the adoption of the respective agreement. In that dangerous way, time and room are created for the militarist circles of the United States, supported by their allies in

(Mr. Handl, Czechoslovakia)

certain other member countries of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), to push ahead with the implementation of their well-known plans for the development and manufacture of new types of chemical weapons, in the first place the binary weapons. The campaign launched by them around the so-called reports of the alleged use of chemical weapons in Afghanistan and some other Asian countries is in reality nothing but a smokescreen, yet another attempt at provoking complications in international life and justifying a new dangerous round of the arms race.

The short time that has elapsed since the report in A/36/613 was submitted has not been sufficient to enable the Government of Czechoslovakia and, apparently, the Governments of other member countries to study the report thoroughly and to formulate a detailed position on it, which would require the opinion of appropriate Government experts.

None the less, even this case shows that by means of slander and invention one can cast a shadow on the positive development of international life, but one cannot make truth out of a lie. Even a cursory perusal of the report leads to the clear conclusion that the Group of Experts entrusted with its compilation has not discovered a single piece of material or other evidence in support of the propagandistic assertions concerning the alleged use of chemical weapons, although surprisingly enough they continue to be disseminated not only by the mass media but even by the official authorities of some countries. It is obvious that in this respect the work of the Group of Experts did not lead to the conclusions that apparently were expected of it. The truth of the matter is that no such evidence exists, and if it did exist, nobody under any circumstances would be able to cover it up, just as it was impossible either in the First World War or in the case of the United States aggression against Viet Nam, or in other cases when chemical agents were used against the population. After all, it is a well-known fact that any use of chemical weapons represents an act the consequences of which are more than apparent and visible at first sight. They leave deep and long-term marks both on people and nature which therefore do not need several years of

(Mr. Handl, Czechoslovakia)

complicated investigation to be discovered.

All these widely acknowledged facts show clearly that it would be not only superficial but even most detrimental to continue an investigation which in any case has already been proved to be without foundation. Unfortunately, the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/36/L.54 are apparently guided by other motives. In reality, the draft covers up the real state of affairs and constitutes an attempt to continue along the road of fruitless polemics and confrontation.

For the above-mentioned reasons, the Czechoslovak delegation strongly opposes any prolongation of the mandate of the Group of Experts. Consequently, it is our intention to vote against the draft resolution in document A/C.1/36/L.54.

Mr. ERDENECHULUUN (Mongolia)(interpretation from Russian): The Mongolian delegation has taken a preliminary look at the report of the Secretary-General in document A/36/613 of 20 November 1981, to which is annexed the report prepared by the Group of Experts, and we should like to say a few things about it and about draft resolution A/C.1/36/L.54.

At the thirty-fifth session of the General Assembly, our delegation most vigorously opposed the adoption of a draft resolution - which has since become known as resolution 35/144 C - in accordance with which a Group of Experts was set up and a study carried out to establish the reliability of facts pertaining to reports regarding the possible use of chemical weapons. There is no need to say anything about the unsavoury goals of the authors of that initiative. Even at that time the socialist countries said that the adoption of such a resolution would call into question the effectiveness of the 1925 Geneva Protocol and in essence would be tantamount to an attempt by means of a General Assembly resolution at introducing amendments and additions to that Protocol.

The illegality of the adoption of that resolution consisted in that it would carry out the study on the basis of certain press reports only, thus creating a very dangerous precedent. The unfounded nature of the adoption of the resolution has been abundantly confirmed by the results of the research and study undertaken. Without questioning the partiality, or lack of it, of the Group of Experts, the conclusions to which they came really speak for themselves. But I shall say something about those conclusions a little later on.

Now, unfortunately, at this session too a draft resolution has been put forward in document A/C.1/36/L.54 which, if adopted, would extend the Group of Experts' mandate so that it can continue its study into establishing certain facts about the alleged use of chemical weapons - and this persistence cannot fail to arouse certain suspicions.

What are the authors of this draft resolution aiming at after all? It would appear that that is entirely clear. The Group of Experts, having spent quite a good deal of money, have not quite achieved what some of the sponsors

(Mr. Erdenechuluun, Mongolia)

had intended. Are they about to achieve anything now? I do not think so. What arguments are put forward by the sponsors of this draft to justify the further extension of the mandate of the Group of Experts? The argument is that the Group of Experts has not yet concluded its work.

The draft contains certain conclusions from the report itself. Frankly speaking, the draft resolution includes only the conclusions which in essence distort the actual state of affairs. They are taken in isolation from the general context.

Our understanding of the report's conclusions is such that the Group of Experts has concluded its work. It has done everything that was required of it in operative paragraph 5 of resolution 35/144 C.

The Secretary-General addressed some inquiries to all Member States and in reply received answers from 24 Governments. International organizations presented their views, evidence was collected and studied, and everything is in the report of the Group of Experts. After all that work done by the Group, the experts came to the conclusion that after the consideration of the reports which had come in and an evaluation of the individual cases presented in them they were not in a position to reach any final conclusions as to whether or not chemical weapons had actually been used in warfare. That is the first and major conclusion drawn by the Group of Experts.

The Group also notes that, in spite of the fact that all those questioned mentioned the possible use of chemical weapons, it was unable to detect any signs or symptoms which would suggest that those persons had been exposed to the effects of chemical warfare agents. The Group of Experts, after investigating possible victims who had allegedly been recently subjected to chemical substances, was unable to state that those persons had actually been suffering from the effects of such weapons and the analysis carried out did not reveal any appreciable deviation.

(Mr. Erdenechuluun, Mongolia)

Now, with reference to the need for timely access to the region or area in which allegedly chemical substances had been used, the Group of Experts talks about access in general. That is quite understandable. Nothing is said here about any concrete cases or area; the question is handled in a general way -- and I am sure that that is quite right.

In a word, a preliminary look at the report of the Group of Experts leaves no doubt that their work has been concluded.

In so far as concerns the possible visit to Pakistan, mentioned in paragraph 77 of the report, we have serious doubts about the usefulness and need for such a step.

We should also bear in mind the fact that governments have not had time to familiarize themselves with the report of the Group of Experts. In all probability it should be studied by the governments concerned; it should also be studied by proper experts. The report has a specific character. I do not think that most of the States represented here have experts in that field.

Furthermore, the report was ready on 20 November and circulated even later than that. In addition, the draft resolution has financial implications. The amount asked for in that connexion is something more than \$320,800. When will the Fifth Committee have time to consider this matter? If I am not mistaken, according to a General Assembly decision, all draft resolutions with financial implications must be considered and acted on before 1 December; today is 4 December.

On the basis of what I have said, the Mongolian delegation will, as previously, vote against the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/36/L.54.

Mr. SHUSTOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): The Soviet delegation, from the very outset opposed the creation of the Group of Experts to Investigate Reports on the Alleged Use of Chemical Weapons. It viewed the proposal on the subject, inspired by the United States at the thirty-fifth session of the General Assembly, as a scheme the goal of which was, by means of allegations against other States, to justify United States policy of expanding its arsenals with new types of chemical weapons. Like representatives of a number of other countries, we pointed out that deliberately false reports require no study. However, in spite of so well-founded a position, the decision to set up the Group was nevertheless foisted on the General Assembly.

Now, what have the studies and investigations that were carried out on the basis of resolution 35/144 C shown or proved?

The United States had proposed the formation of the Group with the clear expectation that it would be able to convince the experts to buttress by their scientific authority the reliability of American data on alleged cases of the use of chemical weapons.

In January of this year, the Secretary-General of the United Nations distributed to all Member States a note requesting information about possible cases of the use of chemical substances in combat. Twenty-four of the 154 countries replied, and, as is pointed out in the Group's report:

"... in a majority of instances the claims were not pursued in the communications submitted in reply to the note verbale of the Secretary-General." (A/36/613, Annex, para. 32)

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the World Health Organization (WHO) also submitted replies, in which they stated that they possessed no information about possible cases of the use of chemical weapons.

It follows from the report that replies of Governments did not enable the Group of Experts to establish the reliability of facts and to draw conclusions. Therefore, it sent to the Governments of the United States and Canada, as those which had submitted "substantive information", a questionnaire

(Mr. Shustov, USSR)

in which they were requested:

"to furnish further details which might clarify areas of uncertainty concerning the reports where alleged use of chemical agents was mentioned". (Ibid., para. 17)

At its second session in July of this year, the Group of Experts studied the replies of the United States and Canada, but this time too it was unable to draw any conclusions from the replies.

In all probability, that gave rise to serious alarm on the part of the United States, because the opening of the thirty-sixth session of the General Assembly was drawing near, and at that session it would have to answer for its "initiative". And then the heavy artillery went into action: in September, allegations against the Soviet Union and Viet Nam, were put forward by United States Secretary of State Haig, speaking in West Berlin. On the basis of his statement, the Permanent Representative of the United States to the United Nations on 14 September 1981 sent a note to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, mentioning for the first time the question of leaves and stems which had been taken from the region of an alleged chemical attack in Kampuchea. Also, wide circulation was given to such names of chemical substances as "mycotoxins of the trichothecene group". (A/36/509, p.2)

However, the "new American data" did not produce any break-through in the thinking and analysis on the part of the members of the Group: once again they sent a questionnaire to the Government of the United States and, as we understand it, the American side once again was unable to furnish any satisfactory reply, even at the meeting of the Group with American experts on 21 October.

Besides, at that stage, the expedition to Thailand was set up: the Government of that country on 9 October - that is, at a time when the thirty-sixth session of the General Assembly was already in full swing - decided to invite the experts to visit holding centres for refugees from Indo-China. In this connexion, the report reads as follows:

(Mr. Shustov, USSR)

"... the United States specifically urged the Group of Experts to visit refugee camps as well as the areas of reported attacks in order to obtain testimony and evidence at first hand from the relevant sources." (A/35/613, para. 49)

We have before us now the conclusions of the members of the Group following their trip to Thailand, and it is not without interest to compare them with the conclusions drawn in the note verbale of the Permanent Representative of the United States of 14 September 1981, wherein it is stated that:

"Over the past several years, a number of medical doctors concerned about this problem have travelled to South-East Asia to obtain information. They have visited the borders in question, interviewed and examined refugees, reviewed medical records and public health data and have spoken directly with eyewitnesses to incidents in both Laos and Kampuchea. ... those who have actually interviewed eyewitnesses and victims of chemical attacks believe the accounts they were told are the truth." (A/36/509, p.2)

As the experts write in the conclusions of their report:

"During its visit to the refugee camps in Thailand, the Group made an effort to meet the particular individuals who were mentioned in the United States submissions but was unable to locate them in those camps." (A/36/613, Annex, para. 95)

Like the interested persons from the United States, the experts talked to doctors and officials of the refugee centres, but they brought away from those conversations different impressions from those of the American representatives:

"The medical personnel interviewed in the refugee camps stated that they had not come across cases which could be attributed to chemical warfare agents." (Ibid.)

(Mr. Shustov, USSR)

The only person to assert that toxic agents had been used was a certain Dr. Townsend, a former Colonel in the United States Air Force, and now a so-called "co-ordinator" of various private institutions in connexion with the rendering of medical assistance. However, it is doubtful whether such a witness, who had changed his American officer's uniform for a medical smock, can be considered trustworthy.

As is apparent from the note verbale of the United States mission to the United Nations, American representatives consider the data reported by the refugees to be "reliable". But in the opinion of the experts:

"It must be pointed out that all the cases interviewed related alleged chemical attacks which occurred several months earlier, and consequently the Group was unable to detect signs and symptoms which would be suggestive of exposure to chemical warfare agents."

(Ibid., para. 96)

Nor were any symptoms identified among those refugees who had asserted that they had "walked through an area contaminated by 'yellow powder'" (Ibid.) just 23 days before they were questioned.

(Mr. Shustov, USSR)

Accordingly, it is easy to see that quite serious divergences exist between the assertions made by the American side and the conclusions of the international experts. Even the United States Press drew attention to that fact and expressed lack of confidence in the official assertions made by Washington. The New York Times of 24 November 1981 published comments on the experts' report under the title "United Nations Team in Doubt on Yellow Rain" with the subtitle:

"Experts reach no conclusion on use of chemical warfare by Communists in Asia". (The New York Times, 24 November 1981, p. A7)

On 17 November, The New York Times had written:

"There's a serious gap between the weight of the evidence and the weight of the charges made by the State Department in the 'yellow rain' affairs." (The New York Times, 17 November 1981, p. A30)

Similar evaluations were also made by American scientists. Mr. Meselson, a biologist from Harvard University, in assessing the most recent reports of the United States concerning the use of chemical weapons, stated:

"... in some respects, official Government statements have contained demonstrable and serious scientific errors which damage our credibility and raise doubts about our case." (The New York Times, 24 November 1981, p. C1)

No other conclusion could be arrived at, for the new United States arguments cannot possibly stand up to scrutiny. In the United States note verbale dated 14 September of this year, an allegation is made - and this is, in fact, one of the principal American arguments - about the use of trichothecene toxins in the Thai-Kampuchean border region. The assertion is also made that tests on such substances revealed levels up to 20 times greater than that reported to occur as a result of natural intoxication, and that such substances "do not occur naturally in warm climates". That is a deliberately unfounded assertion. The authors of the American document are certainly aware that in particular areas of South-East Asia the natural level of infection from mycotoxins of the trichothecene group has not so far been studied, and that depending upon conditions, that level can vary by hundreds or even thousands of times.

(Mr. Shustov, USSR)

The American statements with regard to the alleged uses of chemical weapons contain many other absurd and scientifically weak assertions. This has convincingly been demonstrated by the vast amount of factual material contained in the note verbale from the Permanent Representative of the USSR to the United Nations that has been circulated today as document A/C.1/36/16. From that document, the absurdity of the attempts to suggest that the Soviet Union has any hand in the use of poisonous or toxic substances in Afghanistan is made abundantly clear. The purpose of such fabrications is clearly to attempt to divert attention from the well-known fact that certain gangs are being equipped with chemical ammunition of American manufacture, gangs that have intruded into Afghanistan territory from abroad. The bandits have been using such weapons against the peaceful population and against school children and livestock. On 25 March 1980, in the Afghanistan province of Herat, after the rout of one such gang, American chemical hand-grenades were found among the weapons and ammunition captured, samples of which were displayed to representatives of a number of international organizations and foreign journalists at a Press conference in Kabul. This is but one of many examples. It is hardly seemly, therefore, for American representatives to talk about the appearance of chemical weapons in Afghanistan.

The report of the Group of Experts, and many other documents, facts and actual events, all lead to the following conclusions: first, none of the Governments is in possession of any data confirming the assertions made by the American side about the alleged combat use of chemical substances in Kampuchea, Laos and Afghanistan; secondly, there is no single, competent international organization in possession of such facts; thirdly, the United States does not possess any data to confirm its allegations. All the old and new arguments, when put to the test, have been shown to be fabrications and outright falsehoods.

This was all well known as long ago as last year's session of the General Assembly. We therefore voted at that time against the creation of the Group

(Mr. Shustov, USSR)

of Experts, and we believe that an immediate end must be put to this futile scheme. Our delegation will vote against the draft resolution submitted by the Western countries, which would provide for an extension of the Group of Experts' mandate. What work would that Group be doing in the future? There are vague indications in the Western draft resolution that suggest that the Group has not concluded its studies. This is difficult to understand. Only one country invited the Group in, and that country was Pakistan. With what end in view? This, too, is difficult to understand. After all, the Pakistanis had issued no statements about the use of chemical weapons, whereas representatives of international organizations had made certain statements. For example, the leader of the delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Mr. Monod, stated in Peshawar that not a single patient had ever come to the doctors of the International Committee of the Red Cross showing any symptoms whatsoever of suffering from toxic substances. Continuation of the work of the Group of Experts, which is, in essence, the Group's dialogue with the United States, and discussion of the results of that work by the General Assembly, would be a futile waste of time that would divert attention from talks on disarmament that are truly necessary.

Furthermore, the study of unfounded allegations about supposed cases of uses of chemical weapons can only whittle away the authority of such an important international agreement as the 1925 Geneva Protocol.

The States Members of the United Nations should deal with another very important matter with all the energy at their command, namely, the actual implementation of decisions that have already been adopted, including those adopted at the present session of the General Assembly, which provide for an intensification of negotiations on the question of banning chemical weapons.

(Mr. Shustov, USSR)

Unfortunately, not all States are ready for this. Throughout 1981 the United States has gone on playing its game with this group of experts. American representatives went on looking for supposedly poisoned stems and leaves on the border between Kampuchea and Thailand. At the same time in Geneva, other American representatives virtually put a brake on the discussion of questions of prohibiting chemical weapons and would not agree to a resumption of talks with the Soviet Union on this problem. In New York, at the General Assembly session, the United States set a very special kind of record when it turned out to be the only country which voted against two useful resolutions on chemical weapons, including the one which called on all States to refrain from manufacturing binary and other new types of these weapons.

We have drawn attention to the fact that in his statement at this very session, the United States representative stated that his Government was "now reviewing questions connected with chemical weapons". But the actual actions undertaken by the United States make it amply clear in which direction this review is going to go.

Under the cover of the campaign in the United Nations about alleged cases of the use of chemical weapons, the decision was taken in the United States to build a new factory in Pine Bluffs, Arkansas, in which the binary weapon is to be manufactured. In June this year \$20 million were allocated for equipping this factory. It is planned that the factory will supply artillery systems, the air force, "Lance" operational and tactical missiles and cruise missiles with binary chemical ammunition. It is planned to increase the stockpile of such ammunition from three to five million units. The cost of the re-equipment of the United States armed forces' chemical arsenal has been estimated at \$4 billion, which is still to be requested from Congress.

(Mr. Shustov, USSR)

It is precisely for this reason that so much effort has gone into inventing and circulating so widely ever newer "evidence" of a "chemical threat" allegedly from the Soviet Union. This is the true purport of the irresponsible fabrications about the Soviet Union's having a hand in alleged violations of the 1925 Geneva Protocol and the Convention on the Prohibition of Bacteriological Weapons.

However, no slander will enable the United States to conceal the fact that it is the United States and no other country which has used chemical weapons on a scale hitherto unknown in human history. In the course of the American aggression in Viet Nam, more than 45 million litres of various toxic substances were sprayed over the territory of that long-suffering country in the form of aerosols, and more than 2 million Vietnamese fell victim to this chemical warfare. Tens of thousands of the inhabitants of Laos and Kampuchea are still suffering from the consequences of various diseases caused by the toxic substances used by the American army. In Kampuchea alone, as much as 85 per cent of the forests were affected by chemical warfare and more than 50 per cent of the livestock perished.

At the same time, even American military personnel themselves suffered from the effects of chemical substances. According to official data, complaints about deterioration of health due to these causes were reported to official health agencies in recent years by 1200 air force personnel and 60,000 servicemen of the United States land forces. It would appear that the signs and symptoms of these diseases gave rise to no doubt whatsoever in the minds of the experts, despite the lapse of time involved.

In the face of these facts it is the height of cynicism for the United States to attempt, as it has done, to accuse other countries without any basis whatsoever of using chemical weapons. It goes without saying that these attempts cannot and will not have the slightest success.

(Mr. Shustov, USSR)

The Soviet Union, like other socialist countries, has sincerely and consistently supported the idea of prohibiting the manufacture of chemical weapons and destroying stockpiles of these weapons. We did not need 50 years of reflection and thought before acceding to the Geneva Protocol. We did that as early as 1928. Along with our allies, the Soviet Union was the first to put forward in the Committee on Disarmament in 1969 a draft convention to prohibit chemical and bacteriological weapons. Since that time it has repeatedly developed and supplemented its proposals. The draft convention of the socialist countries on chemical weapons has been on the negotiating table since 1972. We are ready to resume bilateral talks with the United States on chemical weapons, but the ball is not in our court.

The determination and efforts of the socialist countries to work for an agreement on a just and reciprocal basis to limit or prohibit any forms of weapon and this, of course, includes chemical weapons, was literally just a few days ago authoritatively confirmed in a communiqué issued by the meeting of Foreign Ministers of States Parties to the Warsaw Treaty in Bucharest, which was published on 2 December last. We will continue firmly and unswervingly to adhere to the policy of principle reflected in that important foreign-policy document.

Mr. TRAUTWEIN (Federal Republic of Germany): My delegation would have preferred not to have taken the floor on this issue. The draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/36/L.54 is, in our view, a procedural text which does not require a protracted debate.

It seemed to us to be a matter of course that the Group of Experts appointed by the Secretary-General in pursuance of resolution 35/144 C would have to continue its work so as to complete its investigation, as is clearly suggested by the Group of Experts itself in its report.

(Mr. Trautwein, Federal Republic of Germany)

Similar decisions have been taken by the General Assembly in the past. Let me only recall resolution 35/156 E, which provides the Group of Experts on the Relationship between Disarmament and International Security with another year's time to complete its work.

(Mr. Trautwein, Federal
Republic of Germany)

My delegation therefore fails to understand the alleged difficulty arising from an extension of the time available for the Group of Experts to investigate reports on the alleged use of chemical weapons.

Perhaps it is pertinent at this stage of our discussion to recall what draft resolution A/C.1/36/L.54 requests. It does not call for the carrying out of an investigation, nor does it set up an expert group. All this has already been done by the General Assembly, at its session of last year. The Expert Group has commenced its work, and I should like to use this occasion to commend it for the diligent fulfilment of its duties, which have often been difficult. It has with great care prepared a report that all delegations have had sufficient time to study. As the Group itself points out, that report is inconclusive. Definite conclusions have not been possible due to various difficulties. All we are asked to do now is to give the Group more time to continue its investigations and, it is to be hoped, to conclude them in due course.

In the view of my delegation there can be little doubt that the Assembly owes it to itself to give the Expert Group the additional time it requires. Only a few days ago in this Committee we had an interesting discussion that dealt with a similar question. As members will recall, we discussed whether a United Nations body, namely the United Nations Disarmament Commission, which had been entrusted with a task it had not been able entirely to resolve, should be given the opportunity to conclude its work. The general view that emerged was to the effect that indeed it would detract from the body's standing, and for that matter the standing of the entire United Nations system, if it did not get the chance to get its work done. This Committee acted accordingly.

It should in our view take no different decision in the case we are now considering, and it would indeed be incomprehensible if we were to overturn a standard so quickly after we had established it. Therefore we do not understand the difficulties some delegations say they have with this proposal.

(Mr. Trautwein, Federal
Republic of Germany)

In this context I should like to recall what the representative of Singapore said last year in this Committee: that whoever is innocent need not fear impartial investigation.

In previous statements this morning a number of questions have been asked regarding draft resolution A/C.1/36/L.54. One delegation saw ruthless polemics in the text. I shall leave it to the delegations of this Committee to judge for themselves whether they find any polemics, not to speak of ruthless ones, in the text of the draft resolution. Another delegation asked what draft resolution A/C.1/36/L.54 is really aimed at. I can reassure that delegation that the aims of the draft resolution are clearly set out in the text.

The delegation of the Soviet Union, which has just addressed the Committee, was, I noted, unable to give one reason why we should not give the Group of Experts the opportunity to continue and conclude its work.

We were given an interesting report on some of the activities of the Group during this year. The detailed comments on the report of the Group of Experts showed that any allegations that we may have heard this morning that Governments have not had sufficient time to study the report are without foundation. Furthermore, we were told that the Group had not yet come to definite conclusions. That is correct. It is precisely because the report is inconclusive that my delegation and many others feel that the Group should be given a chance to draw up, after some further work, a conclusive report.

Therefore my delegation will vote in favour of draft resolution A/C.1/36/L.54, and I should like to urge all delegations to do the same.

Mr. de LA GORCE (France) (interpretation from French): The French delegation is one of the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/36/L.54, which was introduced by the delegation of New Zealand on 25 November, and we associate ourselves with the statement that that delegation made on that occasion.

We wish briefly to restate the reasons why the mandate of the Group of Experts created last year by General Assembly resolution 35/144 C should be extended. These reasons are implicit in the report presented by the Group

(Mr. de La Gorce, France)

of Experts. First the Group was created at an abnormally late date. Its formation was begun in April but completed only in July 1981, when its first real meeting took place. Moreover, its work was delayed by the undue amount of time that was allotted for the submission of some of the correspondence that was addressed through the Secretariat to those for whom it was intended. The time thus lost and the fact that on-site investigations could not take place in the very areas where, according to the information received, chemical weapons were used, considerably reduced the possibilities of the inquiry. Moreover, the Group of Experts itself stressed the importance of speedy action regarding the collection of information and testimony.

The investigations which the Group had been instructed to conduct have thus far been carried out in only one country, and the information it has received was communicated to it only at the October session. The Group was able to make the necessary trip only early in November. Not enough time, then, was allotted for its mission.

The examination and analysis of some of the samples collected by the Group of Experts or received by other means has not yet been carried out. It is important for the Group of Experts to study the results of these operations.

Furthermore, at its October session, the Group had before it new material about which all that can be said at this stage is that a thorough investigation is necessary and scope and implications of that investigation should be considered in the light of the results achieved.

The Group of Experts has been invited to go to one country to carry out investigations.

It would seem, then, that the Group did not fully discharge its mandate and that it must pursue its task and report to the General Assembly on the results of the work that it still has to carry out.

In conclusion the French delegation wishes to stress the spirit underlying draft resolution A/C.1/36/L.54. The proposal does not imply any accusation; it reveals no desire for polemics; it is intended solely to express the vigilance of the international community regarding respect for and the authority of a fundamental instrument - namely, the Protocol signed in

(Mr. de La Gorce, France)

Geneva in 1925 banning the use of chemical and bacteriological weapons, of which France is the depositary. This concern prompts us to attach great importance to an impartial determination of the facts as long as there is any possibility the above instrument has not been respected.

The French delegation hopes that the same spirit will prevail in the debate and in the vote on draft resolution A/C.1/36/L.54, and we hope that a broad majority will support the proposed measure.

Mr. MARTYNOV (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) (interpretation from Russian): As members will recall, the delegation of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic was among those countries which voted against resolution 35/144 C. Our delegation, with others, pointed out that that resolution was provocative in nature. It undermined confidence in the 1925 Geneva Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare and, in the final analysis, its goal was to give a green light for a new spiral in the chemical arms race, which is being developed by the United States, particularly through the means of the new generation of chemical weapons, the binary weapons.

It is well known - and this figure has already been mentioned today - that the United States plans to increase its stockpile of chemical ammunition from 3 million to 5 million units. The cost of carrying out those plans for the chemical re-equipment of the United States army has been assessed at \$4 billion. Resolution 35/144 C is nothing but a trumped up and artificial pretext to justify that new spiral in the arms race, a pretext by which the United States is attempting to get out of the resumption of bilateral talks with the Soviet Union and of constructive participation in multilateral talks on this question which are going on in the Committee on Disarmament. They are attempting to do so in spite of the many appeals from the international community, particularly in those contained in the two resolutions that were recently adopted by our Committee in documents A/C.1/36/L.35 and A/C.1/36/L.36/Rev.1. We would point out, incidentally, that the United States was the only State Member of the United Nations which failed to support both of those resolutions.

Nevertheless, despite all those circumstances, the United Nations has had crudely foisted upon it a so-called study, the result of which is now before us. What were the results of that study? The answer to that question is clear. The hopes of those who are behind this insinuation have not been supported. That is demonstrated by the report itself in document A/36/613, and it could hardly have been otherwise.

(Mr. Martynov, Byelorussian SSR)

Our delegation would now like to say something in detail about the report itself. To a considerable degree it is technical in nature and, at the same time, even a preliminary look at the report results in entirely obvious conclusions to the effect that any further study or investigation would be completely futile. It should be pointed out that only 24 States out of more than 150 Members of the United Nations considered it appropriate to reply to the inquiry of the Secretary-General in resolution 35/144 C. All the international organizations to which those inquiries were directed made a point of not taking part in that unworthy enterprise.

Furthermore, at the beginning the Group of Experts relied principally on communications from just two States. Nevertheless, subsequently it was only the United States which ended up being the sole supplier of pseudo-information. Therefore, what kind of objectivity and impartiality can there be here?

Furthermore, in spite of all the efforts of the United States, its reports were entirely feeble, unfounded and misleading. That is demonstrated by the fact that the Group of Experts had to ask the United States for explanations after the arrival of each communication. That is also shown by the nature of the questions to which the communications of the United States failed to provide answers. If we look at annexes I and IV of the report which contain those questions, then it is obvious even to the innocent bystander that the United States was unable to give any real coherent information on any of the most important aspects of the study, which made the unfounded nature of those assertions amply clear.

Paragraph 67 of the report states that the samples presented by the United States from some source or other, which is not known, could not possibly serve as a basis for arriving at impartial conclusions. Furthermore, the persons referred to by the United States in its reports are represented as fundamental primary witnesses but in fact were non-existent, which is shown by paragraphs 80 and 84 (e) of the report, and paragraph 95 of the section entitled "Conclusions".

(Mr. Martynov, Byelorussian SSR)

We have heard people ask, "Why did some countries refuse to permit an investigation on their own territory?" The answer is quite obvious. A sovereign State, secure in its conviction that no violations of international instruments have occurred on its territory, is not obliged to permit any on-site inspections. That is its undeniable and entirely legitimate right. Furthermore, that is the way the Government of Thailand conducted itself, which is shown in the report. With respect to the material on which the Group was forced to rely, the Group of Experts decided to consider as its basis the information provided by so-called witnesses of possible chemical attack or victims of such attack. That is shown in paragraph 51 (a) of the section of the report entitled "Methods". However, in paragraph 53 we read "it was difficult to determine the objectivity of alleged victims or witnesses". (A/36/613, annex, para. 53) That makes it unambiguously clear that the main information that was given to the Group was biased.

(Mr. Martynov, Byelorussian SSR)

Furthermore, in paragraph 85 of the report the Group clearly states:

"it could not overlook the fact that it was difficult to determine the objectivity of alleged victims or witnesses. (Ibid., para. 85)

Then it states -- and I should like to stress this:

"most probably the alleged victims or eyewitnesses sometimes did not have proper appreciation of space and time" (Ibid., para. 86).

Thus it is clear that the information that the Group was forced to use was neither impartial nor objective. Without going into the scientific aspects of the matter, which is the business of competent specialists, we would point out briefly that the assertions made in the communications from the United States were based upon the fact that mycotoxins were supposed to have been discovered in the samples that were taken, but in that regard we may read in the report in black and white:

"various authors have demonstrated the presence of mycotoxin-producing fungi and the production of mycotoxins in rather warm climates"

(A/36/613, annex III (C), para. 5).

That means that mycotoxins appear there in natural form. We may see from the foot-notes that this conclusion is attributed to well-known scientists from precisely the climatic region that is in question here. Therefore there can be no doubt about the reliability of these conclusions.

Now, turning to the conclusions of the Group of Experts, it is noted that the Group, even using the partial and unobjective information it was forced to use:

"found itself unable to reach a final conclusion as to whether or not chemical warfare agents had been used" (A/36/613, annex, para. 93).

The wording used here is somewhat vague, but the text of the report contains some much franker formulations, and we should like to quote some of them. For instance, the following is stated:

"Some mention of grenades or remnants of chemical ammunition was reported, but no elaboration was provided of such samples which could have contributed to the identification of the alleged chemical attack." (Ibid., para. 54)

(Mr. Martynov, Byelorussian SSR)

"In view of the imprecision of many reports, no conclusion could be reached from them." (Ibid., para. 57)

"Many of the reported cases lack any reference to symptoms."
(Ibid., para. 60A)

"no significant clinical data were provided which could have helped in reaching an adequate assessment of the situation" (Ibid.).

"the above classification of the cases ... in no way establishes that the Group was in a position to suggest that such agents might have actually been used" (Ibid., para. 61).

"In the instances where bombs or rockets were mentioned, no samples of the remnants of such delivery systems ... were provided" (Ibid., para. 87).

"The medical personnel interviewed in the refugee camps stated that they did not come across cases which could be attributed to chemical warfare agents" (Ibid., para. 95).

Those are direct quotations. Thus the report makes it absolutely clear that, in spite of the subterfuges to which the United States resorted, the Group found no evidence of the use of chemical weapons. This means that chemical weapons were not used, as no other evidence can possibly exist. That is the only conclusion that can be drawn by any objective and unprejudiced observer. The only logical conclusion one can draw from the situation and the conclusion that has been indicated to the international community by the General Assembly and the First Committee - the one drawn in the report - is that this dirty scheme should be stopped. If this dishonourable game is continued, the only result will be the pollution of the international atmosphere and further obstacles to the prohibition of chemical weapons.

Therefore the Byelorussian delegation categorically rejects draft resolution A/C.1/36/L.54. The arguments adduced here in favour of extending the mandate of the Group of Experts are not nearly serious enough for us to take them into account. The drawing of parallels with other resolutions is entirely out of place in this case, since the whole inquiry is on an entirely different matter. In view of these considerations, my delegation will vote against draft resolution A/C.1/36/L.54.

Mr. KRYSTOSIK (Poland): My delegation wishes to take the floor in the present debate to state briefly its position on the draft resolution on chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons contained in document A/C.1/36/L.54 of 24 November 1981.

The draft resolution recalls General Assembly resolution 35/144 C, in which the Assembly decided to carry out an impartial investigation to ascertain the facts pertaining to reports regarding the alleged use of chemical weapons and to assess the extent of the damage caused by the use of such weapons and requested the Secretary-General to carry out such an investigation with the assistance of qualified medical and technical experts.

Poland voted against that resolution, being firmly convinced that there were no grounds whatsoever for taking the action provided for in it. In our opinion, the investigation of the alleged use of chemical weapons could only have a detrimental effect on an already tense international climate.

On 20 November 1981 the Secretary-General's report pursuant to the aforementioned resolution was released. The report deals with very serious matters of a political and practical nature which, even before the findings of the report were made known, have already been exploited in unjustified allegations and attacks against our friends and allies. It consists of 56 closely typed pages. As it was prepared by experts, the use of scientific and technical language is quite frequent, particularly in the most important parts presenting the evidence, the descriptions of chemical agents and their effects and the medical descriptions of symptoms.

It is obvious that the contents of the document require ample time for study - much more than we have actually been given. Yet it is not a matter of time alone that is decisive in making a study of the report. First of all, expertise is required for analysing it and assessing its conclusions. Barely two weeks have elapsed between the circulation of the report and the present consideration of the draft resolution. The limited time at our disposal did not permit us to obtain evaluations from our government experts.

(Mr. Krystosik, Poland)

But even a cursory perusal of the report allows us to draw the firm conclusion that its findings give no justification for the proposal in the draft resolution to request the Secretary-General, with the assistance of the Group of Experts, to continue his investigations pursuant to resolution 35/144 C and to report to the thirty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

Many statements in the report cannot but cause serious misgivings about the need for such a course of action. I quote from the report:

"The Group did not find any reason to doubt the integrity of those who reported on the chemical attacks. On the other hand, it could not overlook the fact that it was difficult to determine the objectivity of alleged victims or witnesses". (A/36/613, annex, para. 53)

"Some mention of grenades or remnants of chemical ammunition was reported, but no elaboration was provided of such samples which could have contributed to the identification of the alleged chemical attack". (Ibid, para. 54)

"Although some of the above-mentioned signs and symptoms could be caused by one or another of the known chemical warfare agents, the Group was not in a position to reach a final conclusion due to lack of hard evidence". (Ibid, para. 90)

"In pursuance of General Assembly resolution 35/144 C, the Group of Experts addressed itself to the submissions at hand and, in the course of assessing the individual cases presented therein, found itself unable to reach a final conclusion as to whether or not chemical warfare agents had been used". (Ibid, para. 93)

"It must be pointed out that all the cases interviewed related alleged chemical attacks which occurred several months earlier, and consequently the Group was unable to detect signs and symptoms which would be suggestive of exposure to chemical warfare agents. The only alleged victims of recent exposure - 23 days prior to the interviews - to alleged chemical warfare agents claimed that they walked through an area contaminated by 'yellow powder'. No clear characteristic physical findings of exposure to chemical agents could be recorded..." (Ibid, para. 96)

As one of the initiators of the Geneva Protocol of 1925 and a State party to this international agreement, Poland is deeply interested in the subject of chemical weapons.

(Mr. Krystosik, Poland)

My country, which attaches major importance to the early conclusion of a convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons, which is in favour of a comprehensive and verifiable ban that neither overlaps with nor detracts from other multilateral arms limitation agreements, and whose dedication to achieve this end has been clearly visible for years, does not consider it proper automatically to prolong the mandate of the Group of Experts. Since the report produced no proof to support the allegations, any further investigation would, in our opinion, serve no useful purpose. It could only accommodate and encourage the continuation of unfounded accusations in the future.

Mr. KAHN (German Democratic Republic): At the thirty-fifth session of the United Nations General Assembly, the delegation of the German Democratic Republic voted against resolution 35/144 C. At the time, the representative of the German Democratic Republic explained his vote as follows: first, because the motives of the authors are not rooted in the desire to implement the Geneva Protocol of 1925, but in the intention to defame other States; secondly, because the resolution can be used to impede the efforts for a ban on chemical weapons; and thirdly, because the entire manoeuvre, from start to finish, has harmed the reputation of this Committee.

Those reasons are as valid today as they were a year ago. They have even been corroborated by facts. One of those facts is that the Group of Experts to Investigate Reports on the Alleged Use of Chemical Weapons could not furnish any proof and that it stated in its report that it was inconclusive. But what are they aiming at who, in draft resolution A/C.1/36/L.54, operative paragraph 2, want to request the Secretary-General to continue his investigations?

Do they have in view just a repetition of the statement of the Group of Experts that it was not in a position to reach a final conclusion whether or not chemical warfare agents had been used? Certainly not, there is more at stake. The issue is to keep up definitions and perpetuate lies. Normally, allegations that cannot be proved are withdrawn.

(Mr. Kahn, German Democratic
Republic)

By this draft resolution, a rule is to be introduced that investigations are carried on until the one who is defamed has proved his innocence, and for this purpose more than \$300,000 are to be spent.

The ultimate aim of this degrading procedure is to impede the efforts for a ban on chemical weapons. The voting behaviour of the initiator of that campaign of slander in regard to the resolutions on chemical and bacteriological weapons at the present session of the General Assembly is self-explanatory: it cast the only vote against the adoption of the draft resolution which, inter alia, invites States to refrain from producing and deploying binary and other new types of chemical weapons and from stationing chemical weapons on the territory of States where no such weapons exist at present.

Also, the only delegation which abstained from voting, thus preventing the unanimous adoption of the resolution which, inter alia, urgently requests the Committee on Disarmament to continue from the beginning of its session in 1982 negotiations on a convention on the prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of all chemical weapons and their destruction, was the delegation of the United States of America. Incidentally, the destructive approach of that delegation towards every concrete step on arms limitation and disarmament is illustrated by its voting behaviour on the whole: in 29 resolutions on which a vote was taken, that delegation voted against in 11 cases, abstained from voting in 14 cases and voted in favour only in four cases. With that negative balance, the delegation by far surpasses the delegations of the member countries of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and other States which are sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/36/L.54.

(Mr. Kahn, German
Democratic Republic)

Finally, mention should also be made of the fact that the very delegations which try to denigrate constructive initiatives as mere propaganda or contest United Nations competence for translating such initiatives into reality, consider it fully legitimate to conduct their campaign of slander under the shield of the United Nations.

The First Committee is now faced with the alternative of deciding to continue an action that is politically provocative, untenable in substance, legally inadmissible and morally pernicious or to draw the necessary conclusion according to the real facts.

As is known, the facts stated in the report of the Group of Experts have in no way been questioned by reputable international institutions such as the World Health Organization and the International Committee of the Red Cross. Hence, to my delegation, only one decision commensurate with the authority and dignity of the United Nations is acceptable, namely, to reject draft resolution A/C.1/36/L.54.

We hope that other delegations, too, which approved resolution 35/144 C in good faith, have found out the real purpose of that campaign of slander and that they are now in a position to prove that by their vote.

Mr. MORBER (Hungary): My country, as stated on several earlier occasions, strongly advocates the need for an early agreement on the prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of all chemical weapons and their destruction. Consequently, it supports every proposal made in order to help reach that goal.

Unfortunately, the motives of the sponsors of last year's resolution 35/144 C were not rooted in that desire; on the contrary, they were intended to cast doubt on the effectiveness of the 1925 Geneva Protocol, which has proved during its long existence to be not only highly important but also an effective international instrument, to poison, by defaming other States, the atmosphere of negotiations on the banning of chemical weapons, as well as to divert attention from and to justify the efforts made in order to develop new and more terrible types of chemical weapons, such as binary ones.

(Mr. Morber, Hungary)

Nothing proves those motives better than the fact that the country which was the strongest advocate of an investigation into the alleged use of chemical weapons this year, in this Committee, voted against both resolutions urging the Committee on Disarmament to continue negotiations on the prohibition of chemical weapons.

Against the background of the aforementioned reasons and because of its purely political and propagandistic nature, my delegation voted against resolution 35/144 C.

This year the Committee has before it the report of the Expert Group contained in document A/36/613. Unfortunately, it was presented at a rather late stage during the work of this Committee. Consequently, my delegation was deprived of the possibility of conveying it to our Government in order to make a thorough evaluation with the aid of competent experts. However, even a person with no experience in the field of chemical terminology can conclude that none of the allegations, whether made by States or individuals, concerning the use of chemical weapons, has been confirmed by the Expert Group.

Let us refer to annex II of the report: the reply from the World Health Organization - negative; the reply from the International Committee of the Red Cross - negative.

Let us examine annex V. Not one of the medical personnel interviewed had had experience with alleged victims of chemical attack, experienced any signs or symptoms suggestive of abnormalities associated with chemical warfare agents, or treated any case of alleged exposure to chemical warfare agents, although the alleged victims interviewed by the Group of Experts stayed at the very same places. Further, in the same annex, the two representatives of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees met by the Group of Experts said that they had had no report at all on the subject.

On the other hand, the Group also met a retired American colonel who had "samples" that had been delivered to him with an anonymous note. One cannot but question the origin and convincing value of the sample as one of those submitted by his country. As to the origin of those samples, The New York Times editorial of 17 November 1981 named two sources. In his

(Mr. Morber, Hungary)

reply to the editor, published on 29 November, Mr. Richard Burt, Director of the Bureau of Politico-Military Affairs of the State Department, denies one of the sources mentioned in the editorial but not the other, which happens to be the Soldier of Fortune, a magazine for mercenaries.

Even reputable and competent American scientists have questioned the credibility of the allegations made by their Government. To mention only one: in another article published in the same newspaper on 24 November, Mr. Matthew Meselson, a Harvard University biologist who is a leading academic expert on chemical weapons, said:

"... in some respects, official Government statements have contained demonstrable and serious errors which damage our credibility and raise doubts about our case."

Returning to the report of the Group of Experts, it is no wonder that, as reflected in the conclusions of the report, the Group was unable to detect signs and symptoms which would be suggestive of exposure to chemical warfare agents. That is simply because the unfounded allegations are only parts of a slanderous campaign.

Turning to another part of the conclusions of the report, my delegation is of the view that the Group went beyond its own mandate in expressing the hope that:

"... appropriate procedures will be devised in the future for the impartial collection and analysis of any samples that might be involved in this context." (A/36/613, annex, para. 97)

That statement presupposes such a resolution and, therefore, prejudices the work of the Committee.

The Hungarian delegation is of the opinion that there is neither a need nor justification for extending the mandate of the Group of Experts.

As far as the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/36/L.54 is concerned, the majority of the conclusions of the report are ignored and other parts - for example in the last preambular paragraph - are distorted. It is another proof that some countries have not given up their intention to heat up the climate for disarmament negotiations and are trying to divert attention from their unwillingness completely to exclude chemical weapons from their arsenals. Consequently, draft resolution A/C.1/36/L.54 is absolutely unacceptable to my delegation.

Mr. GONZALEZ (Cuba)(interpretation from Spanish): The delegation of Cuba to the First Committee made its position quite clear on the initiative of creating a group of experts to investigate reports on the alleged use of chemical weapons when that proposal was introduced a year ago at the meetings of our Committee during the thirty-fifth session of the General Assembly. The year that has elapsed since then has only confirmed the arguments we put forward at the time. Some of the suspicions and doubts that we expressed at that time have been confirmed, and new doubts have arisen regarding the desirability of prolonging this exercise for another year.

We recall that, in the course of the eventful meetings at which there was a tortuous debate on a half-amended text that was only narrowly adopted, one question, which had been raised by a number of delegations, remained in the air: what would happen if, upon expiration of its mandate, the Group of Experts had not found proof of the investigated "submissions"? Would it be asked to continue its work until there had been some confirmation of the allegations?

Now we can see what could then be predicted without one's having had to be a prophet: we are being asked to extend the mandate of the Group. In this way it would be possible, year after year, to continue the investigation of the allegations as they proliferate. We can expect that as the number of allegations increases - which is not difficult to envisage - so, too, over the years, would there be a gradual swelling of the investigative structure, to the point that we would see the creation of a department, or perhaps even the office of an under-secretary to investigate information relating to the alleged use of chemical weapons. At this stage, we cannot rule out even the most hare-brained schemes.

Even with the reservation that my delegation has not been able to study in detail the report contained in document A/36/613, the experts, who have worked very hard indeed, clearly did the only thing they could do, namely to list the allegations received and the steps taken in connexion with them, without drawing any conclusions. It seemed to us all along that that would be the only logical outcome of a resolution like resolution 35/144 C. Now, draft resolution A/C.1/36/L.54 requests that this uncertain situation be continued for another year, although no one has been so bold as to specify whether the exercise would be concluded in the near future.

(Mr. Gonzalez, Cuba)

Because of the importance and seriousness that we attach to this question, Cuba certainly was a sponsor of the other two drafts adopted this year in the First Committee under item 42, on chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons. My delegation, furthermore, continues to be convinced that the action presented to us both in last year's resolution and in its new incarnation in draft resolution A/C.1/36/L.54, is inadequate if what is desired is a settlement rather than a sterile confrontation.

This initiative is at variance with the interests that must govern the work of this Committee. It undermines the foundation of what has already been achieved in the area of chemical weapons, and obstructs further progress towards new agreements in that field. It is of dubious and biased origin; it poisons the climate of our meetings and creates confrontations without practical results; it establishes a harmful, far-reaching precedent despite its harmless appearance. It would have burdensome financial implications, without offering any promise of substantial results. Finally, it refers to an inconclusive, all too voluminous, complicated and elusive report for us to be able to state a clear position on it at the present time.

My delegation cannot either take note with appreciation of a report which it is impossible for us to analyse in detail now, or request a continuation of the investigations which give no indication as to when they will be concluded.

For these reasons, we shall vote against draft resolution A/C.1/36/L.54.

Mr. KOSTENKO (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) (interpretation from Russian): For the second year now, the First Committee is concluding its work by discussing questions pertaining to the prohibition of chemical weapons. The point here is not how in the near future we can conclude a mutually acceptable international agreement on the prohibition of the development, manufacture, and stockpiling of all types of chemical weapons and on the destruction of stockpiles of such weapons but what we have to do to make progress in talks in the Committee on Disarmament on this question, and what we have to do to give these negotiations a chance of success.

For the second year now, the First Committee is concluding its work on a destructive note, getting involved in a discussion of a particularly propagandistic action on the part of one group of States against other countries, planned in advance by the proponents of chemical disarmament and widely publicized in the mass information media. This kind of finale to the work of our Committee can only arouse serious concern on the part of all those who are seriously interested not only in prohibiting chemical weapons in particular, but in achieving tangible results in limiting the arms race and achieving disarmament.

The Ukrainian delegation, like many others, has encountered many difficulties in attempting to analyze this report of the United Nations Secretary-General (A/36/613). This is largely explained by the special nature of the report on the question of chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons which, furthermore, has only been submitted at the concluding stage of the Committee's work.

In our statement, therefore, the Ukrainian delegation will confine itself to some general comments and points pertaining to draft resolution A/C.1/36/L.54, which, for one thing, takes note with appreciation of this report and provides for a series of other measures.

We remember the situation which obtained last year - at the last session of the General Assembly - with regard to resolution A/35/144 C, which served as a basis for the report of the Secretary-General under discussion. Indeed, we were surprised at the procedural subterfuges resorted to by the United States and its allies in order to push through draft resolution A/C.1/35/L.43, which was steeped in the spirit of confrontation in the work of the First Committee and other organs dealing with questions relating to limitation of the arms race and to disarmament.

(Mr. Kostenko, Ukrainian SSR)

It is no accident that we mention the United States, although, in point of fact, it was not among the sponsors of last year's resolution. However, it was not, nor is it now, a secret to anyone that it was the United States that thought up and is now attempting to carry out that subversive action. This statement is clearly supported by the report of the Secretary-General itself. On page 26, reference is made to the fact that the so-called evidence - about which we will have more to say later - presented to the Group of Experts by the United States consisted in the fact that the American experts had "taken samples," "studied," "evaluated," and so forth. We must not lose sight of the fact that all of this base concoction cooked up in the kitchens of disinformation has now been elevated to the status of official United States policy and is being used to further exacerbate Soviet-American relations. It has now become a regrettable tradition that the opening of any regular session of the General Assembly is accompanied in the host country by an outburst of routine anti-Soviet propaganda. We would recall that in mid-September of this year, the United States Secretary of State stated in West Berlin that the United States allegedly possessed substantive proof of the use of chemical weapons in South-East Asia. Of course, further assertions followed, at a lower level of officialdom, and the mass media swung into full operation. Two notes verbales were sent by the United States representative to the United Nations, one dated 14 September and the other 12 November 1981.

Without going into an in-depth analysis of those assertions, I would simply reiterate what the socialist countries said in this Committee last year: no one in the United States was at any time concerned about seeking out the truth of this matter. From the very beginning, the entire affair has been artificially trumped up and is a further example of anti-Soviet, anti-socialist actions designed to cast doubt on the implementation by the Soviet Union and other socialist countries of their obligations under international agreements with regard to arms limitations. The American experts' collection of purported evidence of the use of chemical weapons in South-East Asia cannot possibly stand up under

(Mr. Kostenko, Ukrainian SSR)

scrutiny, even in the view of the United States mass media that were so active in furthering this campaign.

On 17 November of this year, The New York Times stated that making such accusations:

"on the basis of such preliminary evidence sounds more like an attempt to indict the Russians than to understand what is happening." (The New York Times, 17 November 1981, p. A30)

According to the State Department, the Times went on:

"one sample was obtained by Soldier of Fortune a magazine for mercenaries. Another is said to have been furnished by the Cambodian Communists," (Ibid.)

that is, the Pol-Pot clique. The newspaper notes that it was on the basis of such evidence that the State Department took up the campaign. It asks:

"With what certainty can it assure the public that its samples are genuine?" (Ibid.)

What, therefore, is the value of the assertion contained in the note verbale from the Permanent Representative of the United States of 14 September of this year that:

"Trichothecenes...do not occur naturally in warm climates"? (A/36/509, p. 2) Specialists in the field of chemical weapons, Meselson and Robinson, maintain that such substances can be produced in warm climates. Their views were set forth at some length for all to read in an article that appeared in The New York Times on 24 November 1981. And the catalogue of such falsified facts could be extended indefinitely.

The delegation of the Ukrainian SSR has taken note of Part VIII of the Secretary-General's report, which contains the conclusions of the Group of Experts. From the outset, it was our profound conviction that the Group would be unable to produce any convincing evidence with regard to the so-called use of chemical weapons in various regions of the world because, we repeat, its activity was based upon deliberately fabricated and falsified facts and data. I mentioned the source of such facts and data earlier. Preceding speakers have

(Mr. Kostenko, Ukrainian SSR)

explained in detail why the United States felt it necessary to act as it did - an attempt that was doomed to failure in any event - in furthering this irresponsible scheme, and have stated that such action was part of a broad plan aimed at covering up its own U-turn towards active preparation for waging chemical warfare and the development of new types of chemical weapons, including binary weapons.

I should like to draw attention to a further aspect of this scheme, namely, the link that exists between attempts to accuse the USSR and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam of violating agreements and the lack of progress in talks with regard to the prohibition of chemical weapons. It is no accident - and the United States is to blame for this - that for more than a year now, bilateral talks on that question have been suspended. Nor is it an accident - and again, the United States is to blame - that this year brakes were put on the talks being held in the Committee on Disarmament. Nor is it an accident that in the Committee on Disarmament the only active participation by the United States delegation in the talks on the prohibition of this type of weapon of mass-destruction was to block the mandate of the special Working Group on Chemical Weapons. Nor is it an accident that the statement made by the United States representative in the First Committee on 13 November of this year contained not one word about the fact that his country was trying to bring about the prohibition of chemical weapons. We were told, furthermore, about the advantages and merits of binary weapons to the protection of the military personnel using it as well as their advantages to the surrounding environment. Nor is it an accident that the United States delegation was the only - I repeat, "only" - delegation that abstained in the voting in the First Committee this year on draft resolution A/C.1/36/L.35.

(Mr. Kostenko, Ukrainian SSR)

As we know, this was aimed at stepping up in 1982 - next year, in fact - talks in the Committee on Disarmament on prohibiting chemical weapons. We get the growing impression that the spreading of lying assertions about alleged cases of the use of chemical weapons in various parts of the world and the fact of a supposed association of the Soviet Union with that alleged use was needed by the United States to make the process of multilateral negotiations on prohibiting this type of weapon of mass destruction more difficult, and perhaps even to undermine them, as, indeed, the bilateral talks were undermined, with the blame for these unsavoury activities being placed on none other than the Soviet Union.

The delegation of the Ukrainian SSR is firmly convinced that the carrying out of so-called impartial investigations with a view to establishing and ascertaining facts with regard to reports of possible cases of the use of chemical weapons and, in essence, involving the United Nations in an anti-Soviet and anti-socialist campaign has already created and, we are sure, will continue to create quite a number of difficulties for the talks on this question and will do serious harm to the climate which should prevail at any talks if they are seriously aimed at achieving any results.

The delegation of the Ukrainian SSR also believes that the United States has no moral right to talk about the use of chemical weapons in South-East Asia or, for that matter, anywhere else and to concoct false allegations about the heroic Vietnamese people or anyone else. At the same time, by doing this the United States would like to wipe out from the memory of the peoples of the world, including its own people, the fact that for so many years they waged chemical warfare in South-East Asia. As is demonstrated by the Memorandum of the Foreign Ministry of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam about the criminal use by the United States of toxic chemical substances in Viet Name, Laos and Kampuchea, United Nations document A/35/71, the United States used more than 100,000 tons of toxic chemical substances, spraying them all over the southern provinces of Viet Nam, with over 43 per cent of the territory and 44 per cent of the woods and forests being subjected to spraying at least once and in some cases several times.

(Mr. Kostenko, Ukrainian SSR)

Two million people fell victim to the use of toxic substances, of whom 3,500 died. According to data published on 30 June 1971 by the foreign department of the United States Library of Congress the United States used in South Viet Nam such a quantity of toxic chemical substances that for each South Vietnamese about six pounds of such substances were used.

In the period after 1970, Vietnamese scientists showed that the herbicide 2,4,5-T contains dioxin, one of the most toxic substances known at the present time. The results of scientific research by Vietnamese scientists, confirmed by scientists from Australia, Switzerland and the United States itself, show that the very minimum quantity of this agent can lead to the most serious consequences for human beings.

United States Health and Social Services Secretary R. Schweiker once again officially confirmed on 23 September this year the facts of the widespread use by the United States of chemical substances in Viet Nam. It was acknowledged that these actions produced victims not only among the population of Viet Nam, but also, according to the United States health authorities reports, among large numbers of American army personnel which had taken part in combat.

As is well known, chemical weapons manufactured in the United States are being used by bandits in Afghanistan. It would be interesting for us to know how these weapons came to be thousands of miles from, shall we say, the State of Utah, which has stockpiles of American chemical weapons. The mass media, and in particular the Jornal de Angola, reported this year that in the course of the recent aggression against Angola, South African racists used chemical weapons against the civilian population and army detachments. So, the legitimate question arises in our minds: could those weapons too have had something to do with the United States?

(Mr. Kostenko, Ukrainian SSR)

And it is these facts that I have just enumerated, particularly its aggression with the use of chemical weapons in Viet Nam, that the United States would like to conceal while accusing others of the supposed use of chemical weapons.

There are those here in this Committee who have reasoned in the following fashion -- and we have, in fact, heard this kind of argumentation today -- that anyone who has nothing to hide will only be interested in dispelling doubts about their violation of international agreements in the field of limiting the arms race as soon as possible. This judgement is based on an entirely unreliable assumption. There cannot be any kind of interest when we are talking about a pre-programmed propagandist campaign based on lies and slanders against sovereign States, particularly since, as one would have expected, all these so-called charges have proved to be nothing but bluff. We are in principle against this approach to the question. Charges are being levelled today against the Soviet Union and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam and tomorrow they may be levelled against other Members of the United Nations. There will be no end to mutual recrimination if we allow such a precedent to be set.

Instead of engaging in all this, it would be more logical and more sensible to adopt a course of intensifying talks, producing new agreements, perfecting verification procedures on the basis of taking into account all factors and working for the most effective combination of national and international means. It would also be more sensible to strengthen the 1925 Geneva Protocol by developing new agreements and not by undermining it and destroying this international legal instrument which has stood the test of time.

In conclusion, the Ukrainian delegation would like to point out that we will vote against the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/36/L.54, since we continue to believe that the very existence of the Group of Experts is unjustified and unnecessary from any standpoint whatsoever and leads only to tremendous extravagant waste of United Nations resources in paying for a propagandist and slanderous campaign launched by the United States, a country which has stained its character in the worst possible way in the whole history of the use of chemical weapons.

(Mr. Kostenko, Ukrainian SSR)

I come now to my last point. Speaking today, a number of delegations, particularly that of the Federal Republic of Germany, have indicated that draft resolution A/C.1/36/L.54 is merely procedural in character. That is far from the truth, and all delegations in the First Committee should realize it. This so-called procedural draft resolution conceals the intent to continue attempts to undermine the Geneva Protocol of 1925, deliberately to spread misinformation in the mind of world public opinion and to make more difficult the negotiations on the prohibition of chemical weapons.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.