

STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR J. ALAN BEESLEY

BEFORE THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

TUESDAY, JUNE 18, 1985

MR. PRESIDENT,

MAY I BEGIN BY CONGRATULATING YOU ON THE ASSUMPTION OF YOUR IMPORTANT OFFICE AND THANKING AGAIN YOUR PREDECESSOR AMBASSADOR VIDAS OF YUGOSLAVIA FOR HAVING VERY SKILFULLY DIRECTED OUR WORK DURING THE MONTH OF APRIL. ALREADY MR. PRESIDENT YOU ARE SHOWING YOUR ABILITY TO DO THE SAME DURING THIS MONTH OF YOUR OFFICE.

MAY I ALSO TAKE THE LIBERTY OF EXPRESSING THE WELCOME OF THE CANADIAN DELEGATION TO THE DISTINGUISHED REPRESENTATIVE OF FRANCE WHO HAS JUST SPOKEN, AMBASSADOR JESSEL, AND ALSO OF ASSOCIATING MY DELEGATION WITH HIS COMMENTS CONCERNING THE 1925 GENEVA PROTOCCOL.

INDEED, MR. PRESIDENT, MY PURPOSE IN SPEAKING TODAY IS TO EMPHASIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SIXTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SIGNATURE OF THAT PROTOCOL WHICH OCCURRED YESTERDAY, ON 17 JUNE TO BE PRECISE. IT IS, IN OUR VIEW, OF VERY GREAT SIGNIFICANCE THAT THAT PROTOCOL WENT SO FAR IN OUTLAWING THE USE OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS AND YET FELL SHORT OF OUR COLLECTIVE ENDEAVOURS IN ENSURING COMPLIANCE WITH ITS PROVISIONS. IT IS ONLY FITTING THEREFORE, THAT WE SHOULD PAUSE TO TAKE STOCK OF THE SITUATION INsofar AS THIS LONG-STANDING ARMS CONTROL AGREEMENT IS CONCERNED, BOTH TO ACKNOWLEDGE ITS IMPORTANCE, AND TO NOTE CANDIDLY ITS WEAKNESSES WITH A VIEW TO ENSURING AGAINST ANY SIMILAR WEAKNESSES WHICH MAY OTHERWISE OCCUR IN THE RESULTS OF OUR LABOURS.

I AM ALSO SPEAKING TO RE-EMPHASIZE THE URGENCY AND IMPORTANCE OF ACHIEVING EARLY RESULTS IN OUR NEGOTIATIONS ON A COMPREHENSIVE CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION. ONE CAN TAKE THE POSITION THAT WE HAVE LITTLE REASON TO CELEBRATE ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE SIGNATURE OF THAT PROTOCOL IF WE CONSIDER REPORTS OF ACTUAL USES OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS IN BREACH OF THE PROTOCOL. AS WE HAVE EMPHASIZED, ALONG WITH MANY OTHERS, ANY RENEWED USE OF THESE DREADFUL WEAPONS LONG AFTER THEY HAVE BEEN OUTLAWED, RAISE A SERIOUS CONCERN, NOT ONLY ABOUT THE DANGER OF THE PROLIFERATION OF THESE WEAPONS, WHICH WOULD ALMOST

INEVITABLY EXACERBATE REGIONAL TENSIONS, AND LEAD TO A NEW DIMENSION IN REGIONAL ARMS COMPETITION, BUT, CONCERN ALSO ABOUT THE LONG-TERM SIGNIFICANCE OF BREACHES OF THE RULE OF LAW.

IT IS, AS I UNDERSTAND IT, COMMON GROUND THAT OUR ON-GOING NEGOTIATIONS IN THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT ON A COMPREHENSIVE CONVENTION ON CHEMICAL WEAPONS, ARE MEANT TO COMPLEMENT AND REINFORCE THE PROHIBITION ON CHEMICAL WEAPONS EMBODIED IN THE GENEVA PROTOCOL AND MUST NOT IN ANY WAY WEAKEN OR DETRACT FROM THE STATUS OR OBLIGATIONS OF THAT TREATY. I POINTED OUT ON AN EARLIER OCCASION, THAT WHAT WE ARE SEEKING TO ACHIEVE IN OUR CHEMICAL WEAPONS NEGOTIATIONS IS OF FOUR-FOLD IMPORTANCE: FIRST, WE ARE SEEKING A DISARMAMENT TREATY AND NOT MERELY A LIMITED ARMS CONTROL MEASURE; SECOND, WE ARE SEEKING AN EFFECTIVE NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY; THIRD, WE ARE SEEKING A COMPREHENSIVE TREATY THAT WOULD BAN DEVELOPMENT, PRODUCTION AND STOCK-PILING AND TRANSFER OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS WITH PROVISION FOR DESTRUCTION OF STOCKPILES AND PRODUCTION FACILITIES, AND, MOST IMPORTANT, IN OUR VIEW, APPROPRIATE VERIFICATION; FOURTH, WHAT WE ARE SEEKING IS A LAW-MAKING TREATY WHICH COULD HAVE FAR-REACHING LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OF ITS OWN RIGHT WHICH WOULD TRANSCEND THE OBLIGATIONS IT WOULD LAY DOWN FOR ITS IMMEDIATE PARTIES.

WE REMAIN CONVINCED THAT IT IS POSSIBLE FOR US TO DRAFT OUR PROPOSED CONVENTION IN SUCH A WAY THAT WE REINFORCE THE GENEVA PROTOCOL AND IN NO SENSE WEAKEN IT. I WOULD REPEAT, HOWEVER, WHAT I SAID ON AN EARLIER OCCASION, AND I QUOTE "IT WOULD BE OF VERY LIMITED UTILITY IF WE WERE TO PRODUCE A CONVENTION WHICH LEAVES OPEN THE POSSIBILITY THAT RENUNCIATION OF ITS OBLIGATION WOULD ALSO THEREBY REMOVE ANY PRE-EXISTING OBLIGATION UNDER THE 1925 PROTOCOL".

RISING INTERNATIONAL CONCERN WITHIN AND OUTSIDE THE UN STEMMING FROM ALLEGATIONS OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS USE AND THE CONSEQUENTIAL ALARMING THREAT TO THE RULE OF LAW AND TO THE AUTHORITY OF THE 1925 PROTOCOL COUPLED WITH GROWING PUBLIC AWARENESS OF THE POTENTIAL FOR PROLIFERATION ADD IMMEDIACY TO OUR EFFORTS TO REACH AGREEMENT ON AN EFFECTIVE, NON-PROLIFERATION COMPREHENSIVE TREATY.

IN THE MEANTIME HOWEVER, AS POINTED OUT BY THE DISTINGUISHED REPRESENTATIVE OF FRANCE, AS AN INTERIM MEASURE, PENDING A COMPLETE AND VERIFIABLE BAN ON DEVELOPMENT, PRODUCTION, STORAGE AND USE OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS, IMPORTANT STEPS HAVE BEEN TAKEN WITHIN THE UN TO ENABLE THE SECRETARY-GENERAL TO INVESTIGATE ALLEGATIONS OF USE OF THESE WEAPONS. HE DESERVES THE SUPPORT OF ALL MEMBERS OF THE UN IN