

PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE
GENEVA

check against delivery

ADDRESS BY

H.E. MS. SPOMENKA CEK
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE AND HEAD OF DELEGATION OF THE
REPUBLIC OF CROATIA

TO THE

SECOND REVIEW CONFERENCE OF STATES PARTIES
TO THE CONVENTION ON THE PROHIBITION OF THE DEVELOPMENT,
PRODUCTION AND STOCKPILING OF BACTERIOLOGICAL (BIOLOGICAL)
AND TOXIN WEAPONS AND ON THEIR DESTRUCTION

19 NOVEMBER 2001

Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, allow me to say how pleased I am that you are able to continue to preside over our work. My sincere congratulations go to you, as well as to the other members of the Bureau upon your election. The Croatian delegation will do its utmost to aid you in your work.

Mr. President,

Croatia does not have nor has it in the past ever developed biological or chemical weapons' offensive programs. Croatia has, though, biological and chemical defense programs. These programs are centered on a three pronged approach: passive, technical and special measures for defending against possible biological and/or chemical attack. Passive measures include removing (eliminating) or softening the direct impact or aftereffects of a biological attack, while technical measures include protecting military personnel from coming into contact with biological/chemical agents, with special emphasis on protection against lung or skin infections. The third approach - special measures - is concentrated on identifying possible users of biological weapons and taking preventative measures.

Croatia's pharmaceutical and biotech industries do not deal with so-called dangerous pathogens, so the risk of an accidental outbreak of disease is minimal. We would like to caution though that an attack using biological or chemical weapons can take on many different forms, against which constant vigilance is needed.

For example, in a military exercise and demonstration conducted during the Symposium entitled "CBMTS Industry I - Chemical and Biological War without Chemical and Biological Weapons", held in Zagreb in October 1998, as well as at the "CBMTS Industry II - World Congress on Chemical and Biological Terrorism", held in Dubrovnik in April 2001, with the participation of delegations from 43 countries from around the globe, Croatia proved that an aggressor can wage chemical or biological warfare without actually using chemical or biological weapons, simply by targeting chemical, pharmaceutical, petrochemical or biotech industrial facilities which deal with large quantities of highly toxic chemicals or biological and toxic substances. It is therefore feasible that transparency issues and the ready exchange of information on biological/chemical programs may take on new dimensions.

In follow-up to the above mentioned conferences, in September 2001 the Croatian delegation to the Conference of the OPCW Executive Council in The Hague proposed in its statement the inclusion in Articles I, VI and X of the CWC, regulations concerned with and aimed at minimizing the possible risks of attacks against declared facilities and chemical or other storage sites, with conventional weapons or in terrorist actions. We are still awaiting responses to these proposals.

Mr. President,

Croatia is fully aware that the work of the Ad hoc Group on negotiating an Implementation Protocol to the Convention is at a crossroads. Like many others in this room, Croatia has actively partaken in the work of the Ad hoc Group from its inception six years ago, and during this time has often had the opportunity to add its

voice and expertise to the many proposals that have been circulated. We have been encouraged by the strength of conviction delegations have displayed in orienting the negotiations to the present level, and hope that this can be used in some way the return the negotiations on the right track.

Sometimes, when events lead to the creation of opposing views which are near impossible to bridge, it is good to return to basics. We must remind ourselves that, as Ambassador Toth so aptly stated during the 22 meeting of the Ad hoc Group, we are not negotiating a new Treaty. What we are attempting to do is strengthen existing obligations already in place so as to hopefully prevent human beings from being subject to willful infliction of disease. To do this a holistic approach to the negotiations must be adopted.

As stated previously, Croatia believes that a holistic approach was made with the presentation of Ambassador Toth's Composite text of the future Protocol, which attempts to combine or bring together the different compromise positions debated over and offered in the course of the Ad hoc Group's negotiations. My delegation agrees that, while some work may be required in several areas of the Composite text, especially with regard to future inspections and visits, with stronger provisions for the protection of commercial property information needed, it nevertheless provides an excellent opportunity to move toward bringing negotiations to their desired result: the adoption of a new Protocol whose primary goal is to ensure that biological agents are not used to the detriment of human kind.

Mr. President,

Croatia would like to see an immediate re-commencement of the work of the Ad hoc Group, in whatever form delegations see fit, with the ultimate aim of shoring up disagreement between delegations and adding the necessary political momentum for the successful completion of our work. One only has to witness the panic and uncertainty created by the recent uses of anthrax by terrorist elements in the United States and Europe to understand the gravity of our task and what failure in our work may lead to.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.