

DRAFT

Comrade Shevardnadze's response to J. Baker's memo on the subject of the Soviet biological warfare program for the Soviet-American meeting of ministers in Irkutsk on August 1, 1990.

I would like to give my reply to the questions that you, Mr. Secretary of State, raised in May and July, that cause concern of the American side regarding the Soviet Union's compliance with the Biological Weapons Convention. We took these appeals of the US with utmost seriousness, because our state's reputation and prestige are at issue.

I can state that at present no activity is being carried out in the Soviet Union that would breach articles of the convention on prohibition of biological weapons. We have no biological weapons. The issue of our compliance with this Convention was looked into by the political leadership of the country, and we are considering passing special legislation that would envisage criminal responsibility for people whose actions breach the Convention. The experience of other countries, including that of the U.S., who have such legislation by now, seems most useful.

Decisions were also taken for the benefit of strengthening trust within the Convention's framework, as well as on a bilateral Soviet-American basis. It was reflected in our proposal to conclude a special Soviet-American agreement on measures of transparency within the framework of the Convention. We hope that this agreement will be reached before the Third Review Conference of the Parties to the Convention due in September 1991.

We take the concerns that are expressed regarding the Soviet Union's compliance with the Convention most seriously, including those raised in your memo which you handed over in Paris. Realizing the importance of issues raised by you, we are prepared, already prior to signing the Soviet-American agreement on measures of transparency, to make a number of extraordinary steps in order to provide assurance that the USSR complies with the Convention.

First, we are prepared to arrange visits to any biological facility named by the American side in the U.S. memo, that had raised suspicions of breaching the Convention.

Second, we are prepared to invite the American specialists and scientists to work at the Soviet biological facilities mentioned by the American side. This would not only broaden our scientific collaboration, but would also give the American side a chance to see for themselves, on the site, that activity at these facilities does not contradict the Convention. For this sake, it would be possible to agree on scientific exchange, however, we are ready to receive the American specialists already this year.

I hope that these steps, along with the Soviet-American agreement on measures of transparency, will remove the questions which appeared regarding the Soviet Union's compliance with the Biological Weapons Convention to restore trust between our countries as parties to the Convention.

We are certainly prepared to study your proposals that could remove the existing concerns.