

BIO EBB Document 8

Biological weapons

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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 outmost seriousness, because our state's credibility and prestige are at issue.

I can state that at the present time no activity is being carried out in the Soviet Union that would breach articles of the convention on the prohibition of biological weapons. We have no biological weapons.

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The issue of the Soviet Union's activity in the sphere of compliance with this Convention was examined by the political leadership of the country, and special decisions were taken, followed by instructions to authorities to take all measures to provide rigorous compliance with this international agreement.

We are now considering passing special legislation that would envisage criminal responsibility for people whose actions will breach the Convention. The experience of other countries, including that of the U.S. that has such legislation by now, seems most useful.

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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 Convention's framework. We hope that this agreement will be reached before the Third Review Conference of the Parties to the Convention due in September 1991.

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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, 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 of biological facility named by the American side in the U.S. memo.

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Second, we are prepared to invite the American specialists and scientists to work at the Soviet biological facilities mentioned by the American side in the memo. This would not only allow to widen our scientific collaboration, but would also give a chance to the American side to ascertain 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.

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In addition to those forms of cooperation that we described in the document on main provisions of an agreement between the USSR and the USA on confidence-strengthening measures and broadening transparency in connection with the Biological Weapons Convention and handed over to the American side, we propose to conduct joint work by Soviet and American specialists and scientists in the sphere of defense from biological weapons. We would be prepared to work out a respective program of such cooperation prior to signing the above mentioned agreement.