



ORGANISATION FOR THE PROHIBITION
OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS

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“WMD Threats and International Organizations”

ADDRESS BY

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Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 17 June 2009

1. I am very pleased to be speaking to all of you this morning in such a distinguished venue as the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. I wish to express my sincere appreciation to Sharon Squassoni, Senior Associate in the Carnegie Endowment's Nonproliferation program, and to Dr. Paul Walker, director of Security and Sustainability at Global Green USA, for sponsoring my appearance here today. I very much look forward to our continued engagement so that together we can continue to promote greater public awareness about arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation efforts in the sphere of weapons of mass destruction.

2. Let me start my presentation by clarifying that in discussing WMD threats this morning I will refer to my remit and therefore to threats in the chemical domain, and in discussing the role of international organizations I will be inspired mainly by the agency that I lead as Director-General, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, which unequivocally upholds the values of multilateralism and reaps the fruit of it every day in our work. At this juncture in time when global peace and security are under growing threat as a consequence of the behaviour of some States in the field of WMDs, the OPCW's experience demonstrates that multilateral approaches are both productive and sustainable for solving problems in this sphere.

3. I would begin by pointing out that the Chemical Weapons Convention was negotiated entirely within a multilateral framework, and that it is the only international treaty designed to eliminate an entire category of WMDs with a stringent regime of inspections to

verify compliance. Since the Convention entered into force in April 1997, our Member States have shown remarkable goodwill and dedication in building the OPCW into a strong and vibrant organisation. Their sustained commitment is both a cause and effect of effective multilateralism, and a tribute to the world's determination to do away with the scourge of chemical weapons.

4. From the First World War, to the Iran-Iraq conflict in the 1980s, to the sarin gas attack in the Tokyo subway in 1995, chemical weapons were used more frequently than any other weapon of mass destruction in the 20th century. As recently as 2007, militant groups in Iraq mixed chlorine gas with conventional explosives in a series of attacks that killed and wounded numerous innocent civilians. The ease with which some commonly available toxic chemical compounds can be used for nefarious purposes, using rudimentary but widely available knowledge to weaponise them, continues to pose a real and ever-present danger.

5. To eliminate this threat, the Chemical Weapons Convention comprehensively bans the development, production, stockpiling or use of chemical weapons by all States Parties. Unlike the Non-Proliferation Treaty, it allows no exceptions and, without distinction, all States Parties that possess chemical weapons must destroy their stockpiles according to given deadlines. In the case of countries for which the Convention entered into force in 1997, the final treaty date is April 2012. Furthermore, in comparison with the Biological Weapons Convention, which does not have a verification mechanism, all States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention are subject to

a non-discriminatory regime of international inspections to verify their compliance with its provisions.

6. The destruction of all existing chemical weapons is a core objective of the OPCW. Thus, within 30 days of joining the Convention, every State Party that possesses them must provide a detailed declaration of its stockpiles to the OPCW. The Technical Secretariat immediately verifies the declared stockpiles and then continuously monitors 24/7 their safe and complete destruction on-site until the process is finished. The same is done for chemical weapons production facilities, which must either be completely destroyed or converted to purposes not prohibited by the Convention.

7. Ensuring that no more chemical weapons are fabricated in the future is a second core objective of the Convention. To achieve its non-proliferation objectives, the Convention has established a stringent verification mechanism of inspections that to date covers more than 5,000 industrial facilities around the world producing toxic chemicals and specific precursors grouped into three Convention Schedules of priority. OPCW is also giving greater attention to industries that don't produce Scheduled chemicals but whose production processes could lend themselves to making chemical weapons.

8. I should also stress the critical importance of the two other main areas of our work - assistance and protection, and international cooperation - because they effectively contribute to the Convention's universal appeal. All of our Member States share a concern for the safety and security of their citizens, and OPCW contributes to that

with training, technical expertise and assistance against the possible use of chemical weapons. In case of need, OPCW is prepared to mobilise teams for medical assistance, detection and decontamination, and teams to provide the necessary infrastructure support for assistance operations. At the same time, our Member States want to enjoy the benefits of national development, and the OPCW promotes the peaceful uses of chemistry with the fullest possible exchange of chemicals, equipment and information.

9. These, then, are the four main components of the Convention and of our work: destroying chemical weapons and their associated means of production; ensuring the non-proliferation of dangerous chemicals; providing assistance and protection against the possible use of chemical weapons; and promoting the peaceful uses of chemistry. The balanced bundling of these elements in the Convention has made the abolition of chemical weapons an attractive proposition, as evidenced by the treaty's popularity and achievements.

10. Indeed, after just 12 years of existence, the OPCW has attracted 188 Member States with over 98% of the world's population and chemical industry – the fastest rate of accession for any WMD treaty in history. At this time, 43% of all chemical weapons declared to the OPCW by seven possessor States have been verifiably destroyed, and the pace is accelerating. Three of the possessor States – Albania, India and a State Party that requests not to be identified – have already completed destruction of their entire stockpiles. In addition, all of the associated facilities that produced these chemical weapons

were de-activated early on, and all but a handful have since been either irreversibly destroyed or converted to peaceful uses.

11. Russia, the largest possessor State with almost 40,000 metric tons of declared chemical weapons agent, has destroyed nearly a third of its stockpiles over the past six years and that rhythm will increase with the recent opening of a new destruction facility in Shchuch'ye, Siberia and the future commissioning of two more, in Pochep by early 2010, and in Kizner. For its part the United States, which has the second largest stockpile of chemical weapons – about 28,600 metric tons – has destroyed more than 60% of them, including the most dangerous toxic agents.

12. Let me pause for a moment to explain the staggering complexity of destroying these weapons. The US and Russian stockpiles both include large quantities of nerve agents like VX, a few drops of which – if properly disbursed – would kill everyone in this room. Some of these agents are stored in bulk containers, but the majority are contained in millions of rockets, artillery shells, landmines and other weapons. The munitions must therefore be individually destroyed, and that is costly, hazardous and time-consuming work. In addition, as chemical weapons cannot be transported because of safety and environmental concerns, special facilities must be constructed on-site at every storage depot to destroy them.

13. Consequently, the destruction efforts have cost tens of billions of dollars, and billions more will be needed to finish the job. But I am comforted to say that the highest standards of health and safety have been maintained in these efforts by all of the OPCW possessor States

and serious accidents have been avoided. This demonstrates a determination not only to comply with their obligations under the Convention, but to do so in the most conscientious way possible.

14. To implement the non-proliferation provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention, the OPCW has conducted to date a total of more than 1,500 inspections of industrial facilities in 80 countries, and every day of the year chemical industries are now being inspected somewhere in the world. The successful operation of this inspection regime highlights another unique feature of the Convention – it is the first arms control treaty that brings industry as a stakeholder and partner for its full implementation. Yes, we inspect chemical industries, but at the same time, from the outset chemical industry has worked with the OPCW Technical Secretariat to design and maintain a credible regime of industrial inspections and to help train our inspectors. The chemical industry also implements its own governance measures to ensure that the products and technologies of its constituents are not diverted for hostile purposes.

15. We have also been successful in developing a full and effective programme in support of our States Parties in the area of assistance and protection against chemical weapons. The possibility that terrorists may use chemical weapons has generated growing interest in the OPCW's capacity to coordinate the delivery of emergency assistance in the event of an attack, or threat of such an attack. Though the OPCW is not an anti-terrorism agency, full implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention by all States Parties is an essential means to address the threat of chemical terrorism, which is clearly recognised in UN Security Council

Resolution 1540 and in the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy that was reconfirmed last September.

16. These, in brief, are our main achievements thus far in reducing the global threat of chemical weapons. However, realizing the complete abolition of these weapons will pose a number of major challenges in the coming years.

17. The fact that 43% of declared stockpiles have been destroyed in the past 12 years is certainly a laudable achievement. But this leaves less than three years for the possessor States to destroy the remaining 57% of their chemical weapons before the final deadline of April 2012 set by the Convention. Given the short time available and the size of their remaining stockpiles, the challenge is particularly acute for the Russian Federation and the United States. Based on their track records I am confident that both countries will do their utmost to meet the 2012 deadline and they each deserve positive recognition for the concrete steps they are taking.

18. In this regard I am very pleased to see the increased commitment of the United States to chemical weapons destruction in the fiscal year 2010 budget request. The increase will accelerate completion of the destruction facilities at the last remaining US chemical weapons stockpiles in Pueblo, Colorado, which I visited earlier this month, and in Blue Grass, Kentucky. I would also underline the continuing importance of the G-8 Global Partnership to the cooperative work of safely eliminating chemical weapons in Russia. This includes the Cooperative Threat Reduction or “Nunn-Lugar”, program which

has helped Russia to construct the new chemical weapons destruction facility at Shchuch'ye.

19. Regarding non-proliferation, there is of course no finite goal or end point to preventing the emergence of new chemical weapons. As a natural evolutionary process, once the destruction of existing stockpiles has been completed the majority of our verification activities will be focused on non-proliferation. We must therefore ensure that our verification knowledge and technical equipment keep up with the continuous advances in science and technology, for example, to be able to detect new chemicals and the impact they can have on the Convention. We must also be able to respond to the growing interaction between chemistry and biology, and to cope with the way micro-reactors and nanotechnology can affect our work in the future.

20. This challenge becomes much more urgent as terrorists seek to produce or acquire chemical weapons. They must not be allowed access to these toxic compounds or the means to produce them. Inspections are a crucial mechanism for building confidence that all States Parties are complying with their obligations, for deterring illegal activities, and for blocking access to prohibited materials by terrorists.

21. However, verification alone is not enough. National implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention is an equally essential element in achieving its non-proliferation goals. All States Parties must establish and reinforce administrative and legislative measures so that key provisions of the Convention are in place,

including systematic declarations, industry monitoring, controls on transfers of chemicals, and regulatory measures to identify and track toxic chemicals. To this end, the OPCW will continue to assist States Parties in establishing National Authorities to coordinate implementation of the Convention, and with adopting legislation to criminalise activities that violate its object and purpose.

22. But none of our remaining challenges is more crucial to the ultimate success of the Convention than achieving universal adherence. Only seven UN Member States remain outside the Convention today – Angola, Egypt, Israel, Myanmar, North Korea, Somalia and Syria. The absence of any State from the Convention—whether large or small, rich or poor, but particularly one that might have an active chemical weapons programme and/or stockpiles—undermines the goal of achieving a total ban on these weapons.

23. On my part, I strongly believe there is no moral or strategic justification for retaining chemical weapons, which have decreasing strategic significance and are basically instruments of indiscriminate terror against civilians. Quite appropriately, the Second Review Conference on the Chemical Weapons Convention in April of last year strongly urged the remaining States not Party to ratify or accede to the Convention as a matter of urgency and without preconditions, and we must relentlessly continue to raise this issue with those countries.

24. In closing, I would like once again to underline that the OPCW's achievements prove the need for multilateral approaches to reducing the threat of WMDs, and also to highlight what I see as the unique

virtues of the Convention and OPCW in this respect. Whilst working through multilateral approaches is not easy, particularly when they include an obligation of transparency and intrusive inspections, over time the OPCW case proves that multilateralism is an effective and durable means for strengthening global peace and security in the area of WMDs.

25. As the history of the past century regrettably demonstrated, so long as chemical weapons are allowed to exist, they will be used. The Chemical Weapons Convention aims to eliminate that threat by comprehensively banning chemical weapons and preventing new ones from emerging. While this remains a work in progress, the possession and use of chemical weapons has been de-legitimised by an overwhelming majority of States.

26. Our experience also highlights the fundamental importance of non-discrimination in multilateral disarmament efforts. The fact that all OPCW members share the same rights and obligations, and that all are equally accountable for complying with the provisions of the Convention, has fostered a broad sense of ownership and commitment to achieving the Convention's goals.

27. Another virtue of the OPCW is our tradition of consensus-based policymaking, which requires that competing interests be reconciled in order to reach agreement on all policy issues. This practice can be difficult and time-consuming, of course, but it has returned great dividends in sustaining the trust and commitment of Member States and in decisions by the policy-making organs. In a similar vein, our ethos of mutual assistance encourages the sharing of know-how and

resources among Members States and has engendered a strong sense of solidarity.

28. Finally, as I've mentioned, our collaborative relationship with industry has helped the OPCW to develop and maintain an effective regime of industrial inspections and to promote the peaceful uses of chemistry. The OPCW intends to further strengthen its outreach with industry to make this relationship as productive as possible for the objects and purposes of the Convention. We also enjoy the support and participation of non-governmental organizations in the OPCW, and I am pleased that Global Green USA has led the way in developing a very active program in this area.

29. Let me conclude by stressing once again my own firm conviction that global, regional and national security is impossible without multilateral approaches. Such approaches greatly strengthen international disarmament and non-proliferation efforts, and foster conditions to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, their related technologies and means of delivery.

30. I would like to once again thank the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and Global Green USA for organising and hosting today's event, and will be happy now to take your questions.

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