
Chapter 2. Current Thinking in the Chemical Weapons Convention

2.1. Overview and Objectives of a Chemical Weapons Convention

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It is my task to provide a few personal thoughts on the negotiations on a CW Convention (CWC): where they've come in recent years, where they stand and where they may be headed in the next couple of years. These views do not represent U.S. government policy, although I believe they are more or less consistent with the themes expressed by U.S. government representatives in Geneva.

The U.S. is one of several countries which are major contributors to the development of a CWC. CD/500, tabled by Vice President Bush in 1984, forms the basis for the "rolling text" in the negotiations and for U.S. policy towards the CWC. Since 1984, the U.S. and Soviet Union have engaged in ten rounds of intensive bilateral discussions aimed at resolving differences to move a Convention forward. We have had several successes: we have agreed to a joint approach for the destruction of CW production facilities and have developed an outline of a bilateral agreement for data exchange which includes a challenge inspection provision to validate the data on stockpiles and production facilities. This bilateral agreement would enter into force prior to the CWC and would be a necessary confidence building measure as a prelude to implementation of the CWC.

The U.S. approach to the CWC is based on assuring two primary objectives: increased security for the U.S. and the Alliance; and halting the spread of CW technology and use. To accomplish these objectives the CWC must comprise a comprehensive ban on production, storage, use, acquisition, transfer and research and development of CW materials and technology. In addition, all CW capable states must become parties, and the CWC must be "effectively verifiable." (I have used quotes to imply that "effective verification" is a highly complex, subjective issue that combines a myriad of technological and political factors, difficult to quantify and perhaps changing with time and the world political climate.)

While a good bit of progress in filling in the rolling text has been made, a number of problems remain. Two distinct but integrally related areas,

