

(Mr. Bush, United States)

The key to an effective convention — one that could eliminate the possibility of chemical warfare for ever — is the firm assurance of compliance through effective verification. I think we would all agree that this principle is absolutely fundamental. Effective verification, as the world's recent experience with the use of chemical and toxin weapons shows, is an absolute necessity for any future agreement that could be entered into. This is why we seek a level of verification that will protect civilization, our allies, and indeed humanity itself from this terrible threat. For today, the threat of chemical warfare has increased. And until an effective agreement can be achieved, the United States, just as others, must continue to ensure that it can deter the use of chemical weapons against its citizens and friends. If we are to expect nations ever to forgo the ability to deter chemical warfare, those nations must have confidence that others who accept the prohibition cannot circumvent their obligations and later threaten the peace with chemical weapons. They must be certain that they will not be attacked with such weapons by any State which has likewise forsworn chemical warfare. In short, for us, the verification and compliance provisions of a comprehensive chemical weapons treaty have got to be truly effective.

We know that most of the members of this Committee, like ourselves, are dedicated to accomplishing this important task. To do so will require more than our dedication. It will require greater willingness and flexibility on the part of the Soviet Union and its allies to work seriously and constructively on resolving these key outstanding issues — especially those pertaining to the verification and compliance side. And such issues must be resolved if we expect to make progress. For although some may argue that progress could be made by concentrating on the "easier" issues, or even by drafting treaty texts on them, this would be a fruitless exercise if the verification issues cannot be addressed, cannot be resolved. We will not support a diversion of effort here.

I urge all members of this Committee to begin negotiation in this session to resolve the key issues that face us in this area, and to join with us in achieving a complete and verifiable ban on chemical weapons.