

(Mr. Burns, United States of America)

With regard to the proliferation of chemical weapons, this is a matter of direct relevance to this Conference and to the negotiation of a comprehensive, effectively verifiable and truly global ban on chemical weapons. The repeated use of chemical weapons in contravention of the 1925 Geneva Protocol against chemical warfare has eroded the force of that instrument, and blurred an international norm that, for over half a century, successfully inhibited States from systematically using chemical weapons as weapons of war. The international norm is further weakened when such repeated violation of the 1925 Protocol fails to evoke immediate, forceful and universal condemnation.

The United States is committed to strengthening the international norm against chemical weapons, and we are convinced that the most effective way to achieve that goal is through the negotiation of a comprehensive, verifiable and truly global chemical weapons ban - a subject to which I will turn momentarily. In your negotiation of that convention, however, I would urge you to remember the lessons learned from the experience of the Gulf war.

Pending completion of a ban, we will also work closely with others to prevent the dangerous spread and illegal use of chemical weapons. This should include political pressure brought to bear as appropriate, carefully targeted export controls on certain chemicals, and support for investigation by the United Nations of all cases of alleged use. We urge others to join us to ensure that the 1925 Geneva Protocol, which establishes a binding norm against CW use, is not further eroded.

I would now like to turn from our proliferation concerns to the important matter of negotiating a chemical weapons ban. Ambassador Friedersdorf, in his statement before this Conference on 28 July, presented detailed United States views on current issues in the negotiations. I do not propose to cover the same ground today. Rather, I would like to outline briefly the general United States approach to the negotiations. Simply put, the United States is committed to negotiation of a comprehensive, effectively verifiable and truly global ban on chemical weapons, thus, encompassing all chemical weapons-capable States. Toward this end the United States submitted to this body in 1984 a draft convention, CD/500, which remains the basis of the United States position.

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