

(Mr. Fields, USA)

Mr. Chairman, the complete and effective prohibition of chemical weapons is perhaps the most important task currently before this Committee. This is an area which is ripe for serious negotiations. Much preliminary work has already been done and the principal issues have been well-defined. It is now time for the Committee to intensify its efforts to resolve these critical differences so that the spectre of chemical warfare may never again threaten mankind.

In his statement to the Committee on 4 February, Vice-President Bush reiterated the commitment of the United States to the objective of the complete and verifiable elimination of chemical weapons and stressed the urgency of its accomplishment. My task in taking the floor today is to present in detail the views of my Government as to how this long-sought objective can finally be reached. I will offer to the Committee a comprehensive document on the content of an effective convention and outline our suggestions on how the Committee can most rapidly move ahead.

If progress is to be made, it is essential that the views of all delegations be clearly stated -- and in detail. To this end my delegation outlined, on 12 August last, the points which we believe could serve as the basis for a chemical weapons convention. We further developed these ideas in the contact groups and consultations on technical issues.

Today, the United States is tabling our detailed views on the content of a complete and verifiable chemical weapons convention, which we hope will serve as a framework for discussion. It will be the basis for United States participation in negotiations to resolve key issues which are indispensable to the realization of our common objective.

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