

Message to the Congress Transmitting the Final Report of the Chemical Warfare Review Commission

June 13, 1985

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 1511 of Public Law 98 - 525, the Department of Defense Authorization Act, 1985, required establishment of a bipartisan commission to "review the overall adequacy of the chemical warfare posture of the United States with particular emphasis on the question of whether the United States should produce binary chemical munitions."

Pursuant to this legislation, Executive Order 12502 established the Chemical Warfare Review Commission on January 28, 1985. Eight distinguished citizens have served on the Commission. It met for two months and heard testimony from more than 75 persons in developing its report. The Commissioners have traveled to Europe to talk with our commanders and Allies there and to examine our defenses against chemical attack at first hand.

The Commission has now reached a consensus on the points it was asked to consider and has submitted its findings. I am conveying these in the attached report for the consideration of the Congress as it deliberates the question of this Nation's posture for deterrence of chemical warfare.

The Commission has found that the United States must have a credible retaliatory capability to deter attack, that the present United States stockpile of agents and munitions does not constitute an effective retaliatory capability, and that the projected binary munitions program offers a much safer and more credible deterrent. Also, this program, far from impeding arms control, will provide an essential assist to our negotiating efforts.

The report of this distinguished Commission has strengthened my own very real concern for our country's chemical deterrence posture. I urge the Congress to authorize funding for the binary munitions program as expeditiously as possible.

Ronald Reagan

The White House,

June 13, 1985.

<http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/speeches/1985/61385c.htm>